



United Church of God  
P.O. Box 541027,  
Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027  
(513) 576-9796

# United News™

News of the United Church of God, an International Association

Vol. 12, No. 4

www.ucg.org

May 2006

## News At a Glance

### Ghana Youth Corps Volunteers Selected

Three ABC students were selected to help with the UCG camp in Ghana in August: Laura Beth Childers, Zachary Smith and Francesca Nixon. They will join three other young adults who were selected by the Youth Education Team to serve with the United Youth Corps in Ghana: Mark Mirigian of the Oakland, California, congregation; Kirsten Korthis of the Seattle, Washington, congregation; and Michal Lisa Capo of the Tucson, Arizona, congregation. Melvin Rhodes and Doug Horchak will accompany them to the Ghana camp.

Dave Register

### Elders Ordained and Credentialed

The Council of Elders approved the credentialing of Morgen Kriedemann at their February meetings. He and his wife, Joleen, serve in the Johannesburg, South Africa, congregation.

On April 8, Bart Bornhorst was ordained. He and his wife, Joan, serve in the Dayton, Ohio, congregation.

Russell Devilbiss was ordained April 13. He and his wife, Tammy, serve in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, congregation.

Dennis Horlick was ordained April 19. He and his wife, Paula, are serving in the Toronto, Ontario, congregation. He is serving part-time as an assistant pastor.

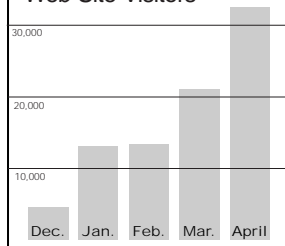
### New Pastor Assigned to Milwaukee/Oshkosh

Dan and Roxanne Dowd will be

See "News at a Glance," page 2

### United Statistics

#### Beyond Today Web Site Visitors



## Google and Yahoo Advertising Peak Around "Easter"

Keyword advertising in April sets new records for bringing Internet searchers to the Church.

The United Church of God home office in Cincinnati runs hundreds of keywords in search and content advertising on the Web at both Google and Yahoo on a daily basis. Results bring in thousands of new *Good News* subscribers and booklet requests every month at a very favorable cost per response.

However, for the month of April, the keywords surrounding the world's Easter celebration were unusually high in response! Internet users found our ads for the booklet *Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Keep?* in keyword searches they initiated as well as in content match results posted alongside news reports and articles related to Easter.

During April, a total of 6.62 million impressions of our Easter-related keywords were posted, resulting in 1,484 new subscribers to *The Good News* magazine and the same number of book-

A great selection of Easter gifts from \$19.95.

• **Easter**  
www.gnmagazine.org What do colored eggs and Easter bunnies have to do with Jesus Christ's resurrection?

• **News Results for easter**  
Easter's hop to April lowers March traffic at RDU - Triangle

Screen shot of Yahoo "Easter" ad

lets on the subject being mailed to the interested Internet users. This represents

29 percent of the total number of Google and Yahoo impressions for all of our many keywords, and 22 percent of our total new subscribers for the month from these two companies.

We're praying that this material will fall on fertile ground as readers receive their copy and begin to read and digest the truth.

Over the years, the higher responses have come from questions people have had about the world's popular holiday celebrations, followed closely by topics on prophecy.

Peter Eddington

## Houston Makes History for 50 Years



Ministers who've served in Houston over the years gather for 50th anniversary (photo by George Foshee) by Sharon VanSchuyver

God's work through Houston, Texas, members and ministry was commemorated March 10 and 11 with a 50th anniversary celebration that warmed the lives and hearts of many. Houston's young, old and everyone in between were treated to an inspiring weekend that served as a history lesson for some, but also included sweet memories for many others.

As previous Houston ministers reflected on the years, members of all ages were taken back to what might be considered a simpler time.

We were also reminded that growing pains are a necessary part of life, and despite the Church's past difficulties, we are still standing strong. Realizing the numbers of those still firmly committed to God's work was truly inspiring.

See "Houston," page 8

## Good Works Program Helps Brethren in Malawi

by Bill Jahns

Last year Malawi experienced a very severe drought, which was especially bad in the southern region in the Blantyre area. In Africa, because of poverty and lack of education, many people barely have enough to eat during a normal year. Many plant small plots of maize (corn) and this is the food source they can afford. However, when a drought occurs, starvation becomes a very serious problem.

The problem was so severe in Malawi that some were eating mushrooms, roots and anything they could find. In one case this resulted in the death of a young boy and a family becoming very seriously ill. The maize price in Malawi was much greater this year than in normal years. Several international organizations tried

to help by bringing food into this drought-ravaged country.

Earlier this year I contacted Tom Kirkpatrick about helping our brethren suffering from the drought. The Good Works Program graciously donated \$1,100 to help the United Church of God brethren in that area. E.E. Salawila distributed the funds in Blantyre and Gladstone Chonde distributed them in Lilongwe.

Because of the drought, the economy of Malawi was depressed and even those with businesses in the cities found their income dramatically cut. Over 47 brethren in the congregations of Blantyre and Lilongwe received assistance from the Good Works funds.

The brethren in Malawi are very thankful for those who have donated and helped them through this crisis. Thank-



Gladstone Chonde presents George Chilopora with funds donated by the Good Works Program for the Malawi Family Relief Fund

fully, the rains have come again this year and the maize crop is starting to get to the market. UN

## Ministerial Development Program Workshops Set

As part of the new Ministerial Development Program (managed by Richard Pinelli) Ministerial Services will be holding two-day regional conferences for full-time U.S. ministers over the next year. These meetings will be composed of workshops to assist pastors in identifying potential candidates for the pastoral ministry. The first four are:

- April 26-27, Mountain Region.
- May 16-17, South Central Region.
- June 26-27, Southeast Region.
- June 28-29, Northeast Region.

In addition to the planned U.S. conferences, Mr. Pinelli will be conducting a similar program for Canada between now and the end of the fiscal year (June 30). And in the next fiscal year, plans are for two such international meetings (in addition to the five remaining U.S. regions). The two international areas will be the Philippines (July 2006) and Great Britain (August 2006).

"Please pray for the success of these workshops," said Jim Franks. "It is important for our future that we have a consistent process for developing candidates for the pastoral ministry." UN

### Inside:

- 2 *Council Profile:* Tony Wasilkoff
- 3 *Around the World:* Malawi Progress, Cyclone Larry, Canadian Growth, Philippine First and more
- 4 *Successful WNP Seminars*
- 5 *Special section:* Appreciating Volunteers and Unsung Heroes
- 9 *From the Word:* Child-Rearing Tips, Passing the Baton, Metamorphosis, Creative Risk, Meek Moses, Motivating Study and more
- 16 *Treasure Digest:* New Children's Corner
- 18 Preteen Camps—More Than Fun!
- 19 *Local Church Updates*
- 21 *Announcements, Tribute, Letters*

## News At a Glance

Continued from page 1

moving this summer from New England, where he has been pastoring the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, congregation, to the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, area. The Dowds will be replacing Mike and Zeldia Hanisko as the pastor for Milwaukee and Oshkosh.

The Haniskos are moving to Minneapolis, Minnesota, as replacement for Jim and Judy Servidio, who transferred to Houston, Texas. Mr. Hanisko has also taken on the responsibility of regional pastor for the North Central Region.

This completes the latest round of ministerial transfers that began last fall.

### New Pastor for Upstate New York

Because of his increased workload in the Philippines and Asia, Dave Baker will be replaced as the pastor of Buffalo, Rochester and Elmira, New York, by Scott Lord, effective July 1.

Scott and Monica Lord have been serving with Dave Baker in the role of associate pastor for the past year. This change will not result in anyone moving or relocating.

Dave and Dorrie Baker will continue to live in the New York area and serve in the local congregations as time permits. This change in pastors will free Mr. Baker to focus on the growing work in the Philippines, Southeast Asia, India and Sri Lanka.

### Beyond Today Web Site Visitors and Program Response

The first five months of activity at the *Beyond Today* Web site show a healthy increase. We had 4,844 visitors to the site in December of 2005, 13,115 in January, 13,618 in February, 21,119 in March and 32,440 in April—a 54 percent jump!

All aired programs can be viewed online at [www.beyondtoday.tv](http://www.beyondtoday.tv).

*Beyond Today* is scheduled to air on more than 160 channels at present. During our program start-up during the last week of December 2005, we received 63 responses to *Beyond Today*, and then for January we received 262, followed by 306 for February, 461 for March and 567 for April.

So far, overall response to United's new video effort has been very positive.

The popular online search tool, Google, offers a video search feature where registered users can upload videos to the Google video Web site. As of the first week of April, we had 11 *Beyond Today* TV programs posted for free. In just a few months these programs have been viewed over 5,000 times. The most popular program—"Is There Life After

See "News at a Glance," page 4

## Council Member Profile: Anthony Wasilkoff

Anthony (Tony) Wasilkoff has served as an international member of the Council of Elders since 2003. This year he took his name off the ballot, so his term will end June 30.

Fellow Council members have described him as one of the most even-tempered and positive individuals—one who has been a great asset to the Council. One said his approach is always, "What can I do for the Church?"

Some have asked Mr. Wasilkoff why he didn't let his name stand for another possible term. He explained there were two reasons: practical and principle. The practical has to do with time demands due to workload. He pastors several congregations, works in the Canadian office and serves on the Canadian National Council. When he considered these duties, he felt a three-year term was doable. "Beyond that," he said, "something would have to suffer unduly."

The principle has to do with the makeup of the Council of Elders. For the

Council to function optimally, he said, there needs to be both continuity and turnover. Mr. Wasilkoff professes to fall into the latter category at this point.

He said he will miss the camaraderie that exists among the Council members. He will miss serving on the various committees. During the three years he was on the Council, he "saw the number of marathon and executive sessions gradually diminish to the point where each succeeding round of meetings has become more serene, thus reflecting how the Church as a whole has become more settled and stable."

Mr. Wasilkoff related how United is very blessed to have a viable working board that serves on behalf of the GCE and the entire Church.

He appreciates "all those who have served on the Council and all those who allow their names to stand for possible selection—along with each of the presidents and all of the operation managers and the entire home office staff who work

so hard to implement the policies and direction established by the Council."

### Biography

Tony Wasilkoff was born in a small town in Saskatchewan, Canada, in 1948. He came into contact with the Church by listening to the *World Tomorrow* radio program on CFQC Saskatoon beginning in 1962. He attended Ambassador College, Pasadena campus, from 1966 to 1970.

While at college, he met his wife-to-be, Linda Eslinger, which led to their marriage in June 1971 in Monroe, Louisiana. The Wasilkoffs served in the field ministry in Louisiana and Mississippi until their transfer to southern Ontario in the summer of 1972. The Wasilkoffs have served in Canada in various pastorates in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia ever since.

Both Tony and Linda began attending with the United Church of God in the fall of 1995 in Calgary, Alberta, where a



Tony and Linda Wasilkoff

small congregation had already begun. The Wasilkoffs now reside in Mississauga, Ontario, where they serve in both the Canadian office and in several pastorates.

The Wasilkoffs' children, now grown, live in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area. The Wasilkoffs' special interest revolves around their grandchildren, Logan and Anthony, as all grandparents will understand. Although Tony and Linda enjoy going for walks, gardening and working in the yard, their principal current avocation has become grandparenting. **UN**

## FORWARD! Where Mission and Miracles Meet

Ever been between a rock and a hard place? Israel was. Actually, they were between rocks, a pursuing army and a very deep, very wet place—the Red Sea. God's solution was the one they least expected:

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward'" (Exodus 14:15).

Recently at the Feast of Unleavened Bread we recounted the miracles God used to bring His people out of Egypt. Today He uses other miracles, invisible but perhaps even more powerful, to deliver us individually and collectively from bondage to Satan. He's using us to help rescue this world as well.

When we reach our Red Seas, He also tells us to "go forward"!

The difficulties we face are daunting. On page 10 Richard Pinelli writes of a challenge facing the Church—one of manpower. As the ministry ages, where will we find even enough pastors to replace them? Mr. Pinelli explains what mature members of the Church can do to help encourage, train and mentor younger people—the future generation of Church servants and leaders.

Though their numbers are few, actually the prospects for the future of the Church look good! For example, read about the over 400 young people and adults who will give of their time to serve the teens and preteens at camp this sum-

mer (see page 5). The enthusiasm and zeal of the young people is infectious, and God can use them to not only help us keep our heads above water, but to go forward!

As you can see in the special section on pages 5 through 8, so many people of all ages have worked mightily, contributing tens of thousands of hours of volunteer service. We applaud their efforts and are inspired by their zeal.

God has packed awesome challenges in that short Mission Statement printed below. "All the world" is a pretty big place, though the Internet is making it possible to reach into corners of the planet we never thought possible. The e-mails we receive from Iran and Iraq,

China and Croatia, Nepal and Nigeria show how God can use this technology to cross borders.

Still, how are we to make and care for disciples in dangerous countries? What about places where it is illegal to convert to Christianity? We pray earnestly that God will reveal the answers and help us in completing the job He has given us. He can open the doors and part the seas.

There is much work still to do. We have our mission; we have access to the miracles. We, too, must go forward!

*Mike Bennett, managing editor*  
*Note: We are beginning this column based on reader input. Contributors will include the editors, operation managers and the president.*

May 2006  
Vol. 12, No. 4



**United News**  
News of the United Church of God, an International Association

*United News* (ISSN 1088-9020) is published monthly except April and October by the United Church of God, an International Association, 555 Techcenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. © 2006 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post publications mail agreement number 1487167.

Editor: Peter W. Eddington Managing editor: Mike Bennett Copy editor: Becky Bennett

UCG/IA Council of Elders: Aaron Dean, Robert Dick (chairman), Jim Franks, Clyde Kilough, Victor Kubik, Les McCullough, Joel Meeker, Larry Salyer, Mario Seiglie, Richard Thompson, Leon Walker, Anthony Wasilkoff

**Address changes: POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027**

### International addresses:

AFRICA (except as listed below): United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: [info@ucg.org](mailto:info@ucg.org)

AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

BAHAMAS: United Church of God, P.O. Box N8873, Nassau, Bahamas. Phone: (242) 324-3169 Fax: (242) 364-5566

BRITISH ISLES: United Church of God—British Isles, P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts. WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020 8386 8467 Fax: 020 8386 1999

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada. Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 876-0569 E-mail: [info@ucg.ca](mailto:info@ucg.ca)

EAST AFRICA (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda): United Church of

God, Kenya, P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200 Kenya. E-mail: [kenya@ucg.org](mailto:kenya@ucg.org)

FUJI: United Church of God, P.O. Box 11081, Laucala Beach Estate, Suva, Fiji.

FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Eglise de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France.

GERMANY: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228-9454636 Fax: 0228-9454637 E-mail: [info@gutenachrichten.org](mailto:info@gutenachrichten.org)

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy. Phone/Fax: (+39) 035 4523573. E-mail: [info@labuonanotizia.org](mailto:info@labuonanotizia.org)

MALAWI: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi. E-mail: [malawi@ucg.org](mailto:malawi@ucg.org)

MAURITIUS: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius. E-mail: [maurilius@ucg.org](mailto:maurilius@ucg.org)

THE NETHERLANDS: United Church of God Holland, P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands.

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Church of God is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples.

President: Clyde Kilough

Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

**Subscriptions:** *United News* is sent automatically to members of the United Church of God and is free to all who request it. Your subscription is provided by the generous, voluntary contributions of members of the United Church of God, an International Association, and their coworkers. Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible. To request a subscription, write to *United News*, United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or to one of the international addresses below.

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Auckland, 1015, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

NIGERIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 2265, Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone: 01-8113644. E-mail: [nigeria@ucg.org](mailto:nigeria@ucg.org)

PHILIPPINES: United Church of God, P.O. Box 81840, DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines. Phone: (+63) 82 224-4444

SCANDINAVIA: Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 3535, 111 74, Stockholm, Sweden. E-mail: [sverige@ucg.org](mailto:sverige@ucg.org)

SOUTH AFRICA (and Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland only): United Church of God, Southern Africa, P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205, South Africa. Phone/Fax: 043 748-1694.

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

TONGA: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 2617, Nukunono, Tonga.

ZAMBIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. Phone: (02) 226076. E-mail: [zambia@ucg.org](mailto:zambia@ucg.org)

ZIMBABWE: United Church of God, Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 928, Causeway Harare, Zimbabwe. Phone: 011716273 E-mail: [zimbabwe@ucg.org](mailto:zimbabwe@ucg.org)

### Internet access on your computer:

The United Church of God, an International Association, has a home page on the Internet's World Wide Web. The address <http://www.ucg.org> gives you access to general information and news about the Church, issues of *The Good News* and *United News*, as well as our booklets. The address <http://www.ucg.ca> accesses the Church's Canadian Web site. <http://www.ucg.org.au> the Australian Web site, <http://www.labuonanotizia.org> the Italian Web site, <http://www.goodnews.org.uk> the British Isles Web site, <http://www.ucg.org.ph> the Philippines Web site, <http://www.ucgastafrica.org> the Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda site and <http://www.ucg-rsa.org> the Southern Africa Web site.



## News From **Around the World**

### Malawi Churches Continue to Progress

by Bill Jahns

The two United Church of God congregations in Malawi are continuing to have growth. Our newest member in Malawi is Gift Chikwela who was baptized in Lilongwe on March 21. A new attendance record was set in Blantyre on March 25 with 71 in attendance.



Gift Chikwela was baptized March 21

The brethren are very thankful for the Good Works Program donation to the famine relief fund (see article, page 1). These funds were distributed in both the Lilongwe and Blantyre congregations. The economy of Malawi was severely affected by the drought. Thankfully, the rains have come as normal this year and the maize crop is starting to hit the market.

The Good Works Program also donated funds to help the brethren with MP3 players. These players are very expensive in Malawi, so we purchased them in South Africa and I brought them on my latest trip. One of the members who will receive a player lives in Mangochi,

which is over 100 miles from the nearest congregation. He is only able to attend church services occasionally because of the distance and finances.

We are still in the process of registering the United Church of God in Malawi. Registration papers were submitted using the name "United Church of God, Malawi." However, we found that we had to get government permission to use that name. We have shortened the name to "United Church of God" and hope that we will be registered officially in a few weeks.

One exciting development for the Church in Malawi is the possibility of having a Church building in the Blantyre area. One of our members has experience as a surveyor and found a piece of property owned by the local government that was not being used. They did not know it even existed until he pointed it out. An application for the Church to lease the property for 99 years has been submitted to the local authorities. The cost of leasing the property would be around \$100/year. The site is approximately 1 hectare (about 2.5 acres) and has trees on it. It could also be used as a Feast site in the future. This would be a great help to brethren there who only average about \$20 a month in



Bill Jahns presents MP3 player donated by the Good Works Program to E.E. Salawila

salary. Tents could be purchased and the site would be an excellent Feast site.

Poverty and a poor economy continue to plague Malawi. Even members who live in the cities were affected because of lack of maize to sell during the latest drought, which was especially serious in the Blantyre area. The businesses of members were seriously affected because of the shortages and the extreme poverty in the country.

The members in Malawi are very thankful for the assistance from their brethren around the world. Malawians are a gentle and kind people. There is good potential for future growth in Malawi. UN

### International News At a Glance



Children help with the literature display table for *Good News* lectures in Davao City, Philippines. See article, page 4 of the March/April *United News*. (photo by Cheryl Lynn Macaraeg)

scribers. The letters that were sent to those who did not renew the *Bible Study Course* after Lesson 3 have resulted in about 100 people requesting the remaining lessons.

The subscriber development letter that was mailed in February has resulted in over 300 responses—a 14.8 percent response rate. About one third of those who responded have requested the *Bible Study Course*.

Edwin van Pelt

### First GN Mailing From Philippine National Office

The Philippine National Office staff and volunteers mailed the March/April *Good News* to 8,013 subscribers across the Philippines in March. The mailing was completed just before the 10th anniversary of the founding of UCG in the Philippines (March 27).



Volunteer staff help in stuffing *Good News* magazines into plastic wrappers in the Philippines

With only four extra volunteers (Meryl Macaraeg, Cheryl Macaraeg, Iyarmoon Dulay and Kristian Antiojo), the staff was able to process an average of 2,000 magazines a day and finish the processing in four days.

Daniel Roy Macaraeg

### Members Spared From Cyclone Larry in Australia

Two UCG members were affected March 20 when Cyclone (hurricane) Larry went over their town in North Queensland. Because they were about 50 miles inland, the force of the cyclone had diminished from a category 5 to a category 4 (winds about 140 miles or 230 kilometers an hour).

Neither of them were hurt, and they suffered no damage to their homes, though most trees of any size were blown down around them. Both had small generators to keep refrigerators, freezers and small appliances running as needed until power was restored.

Along the coast is where the worst damage occurred. The Australian prime minister, after viewing the damage said, "It is amazing that no one was killed. We need to thank the Almighty for that."

Some of our Church members have family members living in the worst hit areas, but none of them had any damage either. This could have been so much worse than it was. We do need to thank the Almighty.

Bill Bradford

### British Leadership Workshop Planned

The Ministerial Services team at the home office has offered to provide a Leadership Workshop in the British Isles from Aug. 24 to 28. A number of members, deacons and deaconesses and ministers and wives will be participating. Thirty rooms have been provisionally booked. Richard Pinelli and Lyle Wely will coordinate the weekend.

### German Google Ads

By March 10, after four months of advertising using Google "Adwords," 500 new subscribers had been added to the German *Good News* mailing list at a cost of 1.70 euros per response. During this time, impressions (ads) for *Gute Nachrichten* were shown 1,321,998 times, bringing 21,686 extra visitors to the *Gute Nachrichten* Web site.

### UCG—British Isles National Council Meets

The National Council of the United Church of God—British Isles met in Gloucester on Feb. 26. Council member David Payne and Secretary Brian Crook were unable to attend the meeting.

**Circulation report:** Jan Schroeder reported that readers have been expressing a lot of interest in the Church. The Council discussed various aspects of the Church's mailing list, including the con-

sequences of the rapid growth in the *GN* mailing list that was experienced in the second half of 2005, which was mostly due to UCGIA's Internet advertising. The circulation level is being set on a sustainable level by the ongoing renewal program.

**Financial report:** Barbara Fenney reported on the Church's financial position as of Jan. 31. The Council discussed

and reviewed strategies already in place and a number of other specific proposals to maintain the Church's positive cash flow and general financial health.

**Child Protection:** Barbara Fenney reported that the yearly review of the Church's policies and procedures had been successfully undertaken.

See "British Isles," page 15

### Canadian National Conference and Council Meet

The annual meeting of the National Conference of UCG-Canada was held in Toronto, Ontario, on March 5.

Various reports were given. The first address was from the director of operations, Anthony Wasilkoff. He made reference to several scriptures that described the work of the original apostles as fishermen who became "fishers of men." We continue this work today.

David Palmer gave a report on behalf of the Media Team. He began with some statistics on recent growth. Then, with assistance from Dennis Horlick, he related the ongoing negotiations to place the *Beyond Today* program on the Christian Channel television station.

Robert Berendt was introduced for a presentation on behalf of the Ministerial Services Team. He said that the team is committed to working toward developing new ministers. They are asking

how to develop more unity, urgency and commitment with the congregations.

In his treasurer's report, Edwin van Pelt read a letter that accompanied the audit report.

The last address was by the chairman, Rainer Salomaa. He pointed out that we all find it easier to remember the names of those who have impacted our lives and care about us. He then expressed thanks to his fellow laborers in the work.

The results of the ballots were read. The Strategic Plan, Operation Plan and Budget for 2006-2007 were all approved. The proposed amendment for restrictions for Canadian Council members was not ratified. The conference chose Robert Berendt, David Palmer and Anthony Wasilkoff to serve three-year terms on the Council. The next National Conference meeting will be in Toronto on March 4, 2007.

At the end of the meeting, members of the conference were given the chance to ask questions and make comments.

Canadian National Council

The Canadian Council met by teleconference March 5. The first item on the agenda was to fill an upcoming vacancy on the Amendment Committee. Michael Erickson of Prince George, British Columbia, was reappointed.

The Council has appreciated the efforts of Glen White who finished his second term on March 31.

Anthony Wasilkoff was appointed to the Strategic/Finance Committee.

The next face-to-face Council meeting will take place in Calgary, Alberta, from June 13 to 15. Clyde Kilough, the president of UCGIA, and his wife, Dee, plan on attending.

Linda Wasilkoff

## News At a Glance

Continued from page 2

Death?"—has generated over 2,000 views.

In addition, Apple's iTunes browser offers *Beyond Today* in its music store as a free program download. We have begun receiving reviews from listeners who have rated the program very highly. Simply launch your iTunes program, go to the music store, click on "podcasts" and browse for *Beyond Today* in the search window.

Peter Eddington

## GN Ads to Reach 5.2 Million Households

Over 5.2 million U.S. households will be reached this fiscal year through *Good News* print advertising. Demographic statistics confirm that through focused use of card packs, co-op mailers and subscription brochures, we are vigorously targeting a "young family" audience in the 25 to 42 age range.

As part of this intensive effort, distribution of 500,000 copies of five new bifold brochures on "Good Neighbor" displays is nearly complete. The brochure titles included: "You Can Understand Bible Prophecy," "Is There Really a Devil?" "Creation or Evolution?" "What Happens After Death?" and "Does God Exist?" These eye-catching brochures, which offer a booklet and a *Good News* subscription, were positioned on large, attractive "take one" displays in 4,300 leading supermarkets and discount stores.

Response to this year's "Good Neighbor" campaign has been outstanding. So far, 11,293 new responses have been tabulated, providing an excellent 2.3 percent response and a cost per response of only \$3.70.

Please continue praying for God's blessings on the Church's advertising efforts around the globe.

John LaBissoniere

## 2007 Feast to Be Held in Alaska

As previously announced, Anchorage, Alaska, will be a "specialty site" for 2007. (A "specialty site," like the Biblical Tour of Turkey for 2006, is a Feast site that is not planned for every year.)

Anchorage will not be considered again as a possible site till 2010. Originally we hoped the Captain Cook Hotel would host the Feast. However, changes in hotel sales staffing led to drastic changes in the rates and stipulations. So a contract has been signed with the Sheraton Anchorage, where the Feast was held in 2004. Details and registration for this Feast site will come out in late 2006.

Since there will be a site in Alaska, no site is being planned for Hawaii in 2007.

See "News at a Glance," page 24

## Ministers Visit Members in Zambia and Zimbabwe

From March 12 to 26 André van Belkum, chairman of UCG in Southern Africa, traveled to Zambia and Zimbabwe to visit members and attend Sabbath services in various locations.

He carried three MP3 CD players and electrical converters purchased by the Good Works Program for use by the congregations in the Mumbwa region of Zambia. He was concerned about paying for excess weight, as his bag weighed more than 70 pounds, largely due to the equipment. However, when he arrived at the check-in counter, the scales were not functioning. As a result, there was no charge for exceeding the baggage weight allowance.

There was another blessing on his arrival at the Lusaka, Zambia, airport. His bag had been left behind in Johannesburg, and arrived on another flight about two hours later. A member, who has a senior position in the Zambian Home Affairs Department, met him at

the airport and was able to facilitate passage through customs. Also there to meet him was the minister in the region, Kambani Banda, and his family.

On Friday, March 17, they departed Lusaka and traveled by car to visit the congregations in the Mumbwa province. The distance is about 80 miles, and the roads are generally in poor condition. Along the way they had a punctured tire, then got stuck in thick mud. After many attempts to extricate the vehicle, they finally had to be pulled out by four oxen.

Sabbath morning they met with 62 brethren in Kasumpa, and in the afternoon they met with the combined churches (north and south) in the Nalubanda area, with 65 in attendance.

From Nalubanda they traveled to Lusaka, then to the border with Zimbabwe at Kariba. All went well, except for an official at the Zimbabwe border post who confiscated a bag of maize and a bag of rice they had purchased in Zam-

bia for some of the brethren who were experiencing food shortages in Zimbabwe. That evening they had a meal, and get-together with a number of members living in Kariba.

From Kariba they journeyed to Harare where they met with a member, Harris Hlazo, and two young men eager to be baptized. From Harare they traveled to Bulawayo, visiting members along the way. First was Mrs. Chichaya, a widow, who lives on a small plot near Kadoma. She does exceptionally well as a farmer, producing plenty of maize as well as vegetables and fruit.

Next they visited Elsie Nel and her family who have a dairy farm near Kwe-Kwe. So far they have not been forced off their farm, and have been shown a lot of favor by the local government leaders. They need prayers for their safety and, in particular, that they can remain on their farm. If forced off the farm, they will be in an extremely difficult position.



Baptized in Bulawayo: Brenda Tshabalala, Johanna Ndlovu and Dennis Dube

Their last stop was in Bulawayo, where they observed the Sabbath (March 25) with the largest group in Zimbabwe (22 attended). Stephen and Vetina Tshabalala hosted the study in their home. In the afternoon of the Sabbath they baptized three people Mr. van Belkum had counseled previously. They were: Johanna Ndlovu, wife of member Joseph; Brenda Tshabalala, daughter of Stephen and Vetina; and Dennis Dube, a teacher in the Nyayi region.

On Sunday, March 26, Mr. van Belkum returned to Durban. UN

## WNP Seminars Serve Members, Attract Visitors in Akron & Pittsburgh

On the Sabbath on March 18, 2006, *World News and Prophecy* writers and editors came to Akron, Ohio, for a *World News and Prophecy* Sabbath. The day began with a combined Sabbath service with the Akron, Canton, Cleveland and Youngstown, Ohio, congregations meeting together. Three hundred and ninety attended the Sabbath service where we benefited from two spirit sermons.

The first sermon, "Will Her Place Be Your Place?" was presented by Robin Webber, who pastors two of our southern California congregations and writes the "This Is the Way" feature in each *World News and Prophecy*. The second sermon, "The Revival of the Holy Roman Empire," was presented by Melvin Rhodes, pastor of the Lansing, Michigan, congregation and senior writer for the *Good News* magazine and *World News and Prophecy*.

After a luncheon sponsored by the Akron congregation, 377 people, including 12 new people, enjoyed the first of four *World News and Prophecy* seminars. Each session was 50 minutes in length followed by a 10-minute break.

The first presentation, "Standing for God in Today's Babylon" by Darris McNeely, managing editor of *World News and Prophecy* and pastor of two of our Indiana congregations, traced the history of the Babylonian system that opposes God's way of life. Mr. McNeely encouraged attendees to avoid entrapment in the ways of Babylon.

In the second seminar, Robin Webber presented a session titled "The Two Witnesses," during which he taught about what can and cannot be established about these two important end-time figures.

Next, Melvin Rhodes gave a session titled "Is This the West's Last Chance?" in which he showed how the Western world has been in retreat since World War II and the implications this holds for the future.

The day concluded with Mr.



Akron WNP Seminars: Dave Register, Melvin Rhodes, Darris McNeely, Robin Webber and pastor Dave Myers (photo by Erik Jones)

McNeely covering "The Roots of Europe's Future" from the perspective of Bible prophecy.

During the entire day there was a buzz of excitement as members enjoyed fellowship discussing prophetic topics. A member wrote, "This was a wonderfully presented event. It was balanced, uplifting and informative." A prospective member who began attending services about four months ago wrote, "This has been a great event! Let's do this more often. This really motivates me to study and learn as much as I can."

An 18-year-old wrote, "Very intriguing and eye-opening," and a 14-year-old said, "It was the best seminar I have ever heard. I loved it! Let's have another." A prospective member wrote: "Need to talk about baptism now—it's time."

A good deal of Church literature was on display and taken by members and prospective members alike.

Dave Myers, host pastor, commented, "The fruit of this event has been very positive. For members and prospective members to learn from, meet and fellowship with the writers of *World News and Prophecy* has provided us with more motivation to watch and pray as we're admonished in Luke 21:36."

The event might be summed up in the words of one Cleveland member: "Dynamite!"

Pittsburgh Seminars

The seminars moved on to Pitts-

burgh, Pennsylvania, on Sunday, March 19. Total attendance was 82, of whom 16 were visitors. Of the 16 visitors, four were spouses or relatives of members, one was an ex-UCG member and one was a current WCG member. Ten were brand new to UCG. Fourteen of the 16 stayed for all four presentations.

Ten copies each of 10 booklets were displayed, with a total of 83 booklets being taken. The number in parentheses indicates how many of each were taken by our guests:

- *United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy* (10).
- *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* (10).
- *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* (9).
- *Fundamental Beliefs of UCGIA* (9).
- *What Is Your Destiny?* (9).
- *The Road to Eternal Life* (8).
- *God's Holy Day Plan* (8).
- *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest* (7).
- *Jesus Christ: The Real Story* (7).
- *This Is the United Church of God* (6).

The local members represented the Pittsburgh, Wheeling and Morgantown, West Virginia, congregations—and one man drove all the way from Columbia, Maryland. All of the local members' comments were very positive. The information was well presented and well received. Several members commented that they were pleased with

the content of the presentations.

Pastor Don Henson said, "I appreciated the balance of the presentations in terms of the content and the presenters themselves. Having three presenters was very effective, and added to the variety and interest."

"I felt it was effective that all the presenters were WNP staff. Readers and members view WNP as a reliable source of information—this was supplemental material provided by men they already know through the publications. Several members commented that they were very pleased to meet the 'faces' behind the publication."

"We were very pleased with the day. We'll see what kind of fruit it bears in the future."

Future Plans

These *World News and Prophecy* Seminars continue to be an effective way to communicate prophetic subjects with the readership. Bible prophecy is a powerful means to stir listeners to a sense of urgency for the times and to commit their lives to the message of the gospel. More seminars are planned over the next 12 months (see box below). It is hoped a wider audience will be reached with a message of understanding, warning and hope.

Dave Myers and Don Henson

## Future WNP Seminars

Ministerial Services announced the following locations for future *World News and Prophecy* Seminars: June 17-18 in Indianapolis/Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

Nov. 4 in Beloit, Wisconsin. Dates for the following locations are yet to be determined: Cincinnati East, Ohio; Spokane, Washington; and Garden Grove, California.



# Appreciating Volunteers

## Volunteers Vital in Accomplishing the Church's Mission

■ Literally thousands of members and supporters volunteer their time and talents to help in nearly every aspect of the work of the United Church of God. On these four pages we celebrate some of that service that helps United in the mission of preaching the gospel while preparing a people.

### Camp Staff: They Come to Serve

They come to serve, and each year more and more line up for a spot on one of the camp staffs of the United Youth Camps (UYC) and preteen camps. Over 400 young people and adults ask for the opportunity to give of their time and serve without pay (although room and board are paid) for a week or more to give our youth a taste of God's way of life.

The example of these talented and dedicated volunteers has inspired the people they serve. When asked "Did your counselor and other staff make you feel accepted at camp?" 99 percent of our campers responded, Yes! Asked if they would like to serve on the camp staff in the future, 90 percent said, Yes!

Listen to the comments of teens when asked, "Would you like to serve on the camp staff in the future?"

"Part of being a disciple of Christ is learning how to serve. I want to serve others the way I have been served for seven years" (Hye Sierra).

"It is a very exciting experience to pass on knowledge and experiences" (Hye Sierra).

"I see why this way works, and I want to serve" (Heritage).

"Camp changes me, and I want to impact lives, too" (Tetons).

"I want to be [part of] the people that help make the 'magic' of camp possible" (Woodmen).

Notice the praise and touching reflections of the campers when they were asked, "Did your counselor and other staff make you feel accepted most of the time at camp?"

"They gave constant encouragement and opened up about their lives and were genuinely interested in me" (Tetons).

"Our counselor always took time to give us one-on-one time. She has been incredibly encouraging, flexible and encouraged us in our faith and development as young ladies, while gently correcting us where we go astray" (Tetons).

"The ministers were never afraid to

just talk to me" (Hye Sierra).

I think one camper said it well: "Camp has an indescribable atmosphere. It's like a mini Kingdom, and I always leave so deeply moved and feeling closer to God and to my friends of like mind" (Woodmen). The point is obvious that camp works! It works largely because so many people work together to model the "give" way of life.

A while back, I was asked by a member of the American Camp Association national staff if we had any difficulties



Camp staff members receive high praise from campers and parents alike

recruiting staff for our programs. I mentioned we had scores more applicants than we could use, and we have tried to open the door for new volunteers each year since so many want to return. When asked how much we pay our staff and what our criteria is, I mentioned that although we only want the best, we don't pay them a dime.

Shock and bewilderment filled the person's face. "How is that possible?" she asked. I told her that our volunteers are convicted that it is more blessed to give than to receive and most believe that the rewards of seeing young people grow and change is more than ample compensation.

On behalf of all the parents and the camp team, a big "Thank you!" goes

out to all those who serve at camp.

Larry W. Greider  
UYC National Coordinator

### Give a Hug . . . to the Feast Sound Technician!

Well, maybe he or she doesn't want a hug. How about a handshake? At least go by and say thank you.

Do you know how much we paid the sound technicians at the Feast last year? Nothing. They volunteered. Do you know how much they deserved to be paid? All together, thousands and thousands of dollars. It is skilled labor, after all.

There are a couple of sites where our volunteers are not allowed to use the sound system and control rooms of the theater. A few extra thousand dollars have to be budgeted for those sites to pay the professional personnel running it. Sometimes union laws prohibit anybody other than their people using the sound system.

Sometimes the sound crew members bring their own equipment, further saving the Church rental fees. Is the sound crew able to concentrate on the message during the service? Or are they even then making an additional sacrifice so you can concentrate on the message and not even think about proper amplification for all to hear? When you go up this year to thank the sound technician, ask him if he misses part of the message so you don't have to.

Yes, I am focusing on the volunteer sound crews at the Feast, but there are hundreds of volunteers every year at every Feast site contributing to the success of God's assembly.

The Feast of Tabernacles is dependent upon volunteers. The Church could never come close to paying for

all the services that are rendered. Ushers, parking crews, youth education classes, musicians for special music, the choir, information table crews, translators and nonsalaried speakers, plus others all contribute. But, this year, why not personally thank the sound crew.

Charles Melear

### Members Sponsor Beyond Today on Cable-Access TV

Brethren have volunteered to serve in the vital role of local sponsors for the *Beyond Today* television program. Below are comments from several. If you would like to participate, please call John LaBissoniere, toll-free at (888) 369-9940 or write to him at john.labissoniere@ucg.org.

Mary Kerr, Springfield, Illinois: This week I received the first four *Beyond Today* DVDs and delivered them to the cable-access television station. All this has been very exciting for me! It has been especially encouraging to see a very positive relationship being established with the station. Once I found the station and set up an appointment, airing time was all set within just eight hours! The timing was just right, as the station had just changed hands and managers. And now, with more automation, they are happy to have and are capable of airing *Beyond Today* three times each Friday! It seems that when God decides it's time, getting the program "on" is as easy as falling off a log!

Lloyd R. Nelson, Rochester, Minnesota: When I took the demonstration *Beyond Today* tapes to the community college to be reviewed, the director seemed indifferent and aloof. To win him over I asked if he would critique certain aspects of the programs. Using professional terminology, he offered insight equivalent to "the lighting here

is much better" or "there is shadowing over there." Since then he has warmed up appreciably and has since given us four good airtimes for *Beyond Today* on weekends. He has also aired the programs at other times and has mentioned that students attending the college have inquired about *Beyond Today*. In the book of Philemon, Paul teaches us the lesson of using tact. I've tried to apply that lesson and now the director greets me with a smile.

Ronald Selzer, Mountain Home, Arkansas: I received the two demo DVDs today for the program and then went to the local cable station. They will start airing *Beyond Today* on Sunday, April 9, at 9 a.m. This was sure a lot easier to do than I thought it would be. The people at the television station were easy to work with.

Angela Payne, Queens, New York: Since I've been involved in the *Good News* brochure program and as a *Beyond Today* television sponsor, I must say that it has been rewarding. I truly feel connected to the work. Each time I deliver the tapes to the station, I remember how I first heard God's wonderful truth and how I felt. This is what motivates me. If I can sow one seed for God's Kingdom, then I'm convinced He'll do the rest.

Being a sponsor has given me many opportunities to interact with others. People generally ask what *Beyond Today* is all about. It's always my pleasure to answer them. To my delight some told me that they would revisit their Bibles. I would definitely encourage others to get involved. It's not tedious or difficult. All you need is a love for God's Kingdom, and a dedicated attitude.

Henry Miles, Henderson, Kentucky: I am glad to be able to serve as a *Beyond Today* sponsor. I didn't realize it would be as easy as it was to get the program started. The people at the television station were very nice and were excited to air the telecasts.

On a more personal note, I have a friend who has been watching

### Unsung Hero: Busier Than Before She Retired!



Wilma Ramey of Jonesville, Virginia, a retired Head Start teacher and a member of the Kingsport, Tennessee, congregation, sometimes quips that she's busier now than before she retired!

This beautiful lady volunteers for several local organizations, including Triad, which works to improve the quality of life for senior citizens by sharing information from law enforcement officers as well as providing weekly meals for seniors. Mrs. Ramey also is on the Health Advisory Board for Head Start and is an active member of AARP. She works with the Family Life organization to sell donated clothes in order to raise money for people who are unable to pay their utility bills.

As part of the Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) committee, she helps sponsor programs such as a walkathon to provide fuel assistance for needy citizens. MEOC and AARP also join forces to provide food for those in need as well as school supplies for children. Additionally, Mrs. Ramey makes time to visit a young friend in the children's home, and she also cooks for two reunions of her very large extended family each year!

Denise Dobson

### Unsung Hero: The Award Is Named for Him!



In the lobby of the Center for Mental Health where Freeman Imel worked in Anderson, Indiana, is a plaque with an award named in his honor.

Below his picture the plaque reads: "The Freeman A. Imel Award presented annually in recognition for dedication and outstanding service to the Center for Mental Health," followed by those who have received the award since it began in 1985. Freeman retired in 1990, but his legacy remains.

Freeman attends UCG in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was baptized on March 17, 1962, in South Bend, Indiana, and he and his wife were made a deacon and deaconess in the Church around 1980. His wife passed away a few months ago. He is 80 years old and still serves in the Church. He just bought a new motorcycle, so you can see he is still a very active person.

Gordon Brauchla

*Beyond Today.* Since his mother died about three months ago, I think he has a real appreciation for the telecasts and a new outlook on life and death. This is especially true since viewing the program entitled "Better Than Heaven."

## Members Help Preach the Gospel Through GN Brochure Program

Brethren have volunteered to participate in the *Good News* brochure distribution program. Below are comments from several. If you would like to participate, please call John LaBissoniere, toll-free at (888) 369-9940 or write to him at [john\\_labissoniere@ucg.org](mailto:john_labissoniere@ucg.org).

*Peter M. Gabriel, Houston North, Texas:* I service two Wal-Mart stores and two Kroger supermarkets on the far north side of Houston with *Good News* brochures. Having been on the distribution team now for about three months, it is rewarding to go to my locations every two weeks to see how quickly the brochure displays need to be replenished! I enjoy serving the Church in this way.

*Bill Wilson, West Palm Beach, Florida:* My first outing with brochures began right around the corner from my house at a Chevron gas/food mart. I came in with the display loaded with brochures. I scanned the store for potential locations for the display and decided on a particular spot a little back away from the foot traffic. I greeted the manager and showed him the display

and some of the brochures. He was very agreeable; and when I advanced my idea as to where to place the display, he balked, saying "No, put it right out front there where everyone can see it!" I was shocked, but gratified!

Another display went into our Travel America truck stop where the manager was most pleasant. He asked that I place the display in a vestibule where the drivers came through from their trucks. That display lasted many months and distributed dozens of brochures—my most productive spot. One thing I would say to volunteers, is that we should at least buy something from the store that allows us to place our brochures. At least they will receive a blessing for their generosity.

*Dale Richey, Orlando, Florida:* Doing whatever we can individually do to help promote the gospel makes one feel more of a part of the work. There used to be a phrase, "pray and pay." Well, the *Good News* brochure program helps brethren go beyond that and hopefully speed up the coming of the Kingdom of God!

*Kathy Cochran, North Conway, New Hampshire:* I very much enjoy being a part of the brochure distribution program. It is thrilling to see the brochures disappear. Who will be sending for literature? Will God call these people? Since I live far from other brethren, the brochure program is an important means for me to feel connected to the work of the Church.

*Bill Braswell, Stockton, California:* God has blessed us with a couple of sites that are exposed to a great deal of people traffic. One of our displays, which moves about 400 per month, is located at the main bus station in

Modesto. The second display is located at a gas station/mini-mart on the way to the snow of the Sierra Nevada mountains. In the winter and spring months especially, this location is exposed to many people heading up to ski. Thanks go to Aaron Farnon and Bob Besore of the Stockton congregation, for their efforts in maintaining the displays and doing their part in helping spread the gospel of the Kingdom.

*Bob Carlisle, Riverside, California:* Special thanks goes to Ken Nelson, our almost "one-man distribution show." Over the last decade Ken has distributed thousands of magazines and brochures throughout the Inland Empire.

## Members Help Reach World From the Home Office

Church member volunteers perform a vital service for the home office each year. Each issue we mail approximately 16,000 *Good News* magazines to international subscribers in areas of the world not served by other international offices (mainly the Caribbean and much of Africa and Asia). The volunteers insert these magazines into envelopes, seal and bag them for mailing.

In addition, they also prepare about 1,200 copies of *World News and Prophecy* and 575 of *United News* for international subscribers, as well as 1,500 Spanish *Buenas Noticias* magazines for mailing in the United States.

The number of *Good News* magazines mailed from the home office has been reduced from 24,000 to 16,000

due to the transfer of 8,000 magazines to the Philippine office.

The Philippine office had been maintaining their own file of subscribers, but the magazines were actually mailed from the home office. Beginning with the March/April 2006 issue, the Philippine office began mailing their subscribers' issues in the Philippines.

Approximately 820 hours of labor are donated by these members each year, which is



Young people from Cincinnati East and North, Ohio; Louisville, Kentucky; ABC and others help with international *Good News* mailing March 12, giving many of the regular volunteer crew a break (photo by Peter Eddington)

a substantial donation. Several members have commented that since they have retired, this is one way they can make a financial contribution to the Church.

At least once a year the teenagers from the surrounding church areas come to serve the subscribers and give our regular volunteers a break.

We owe a big thank you to Linda Saar, who coordinates the work parties, and to all the volunteers from Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton, Ohio, and Louisville, Kentucky.  
*Connie Seelig*

## Local Web Sites Help Preach the Gospel

Type "United Church of God" into any search engine, and you'll not only see a link for the Church's main Web site but links to numerous United Church of God local congregations throughout the United States and the world. At last count, there were over 140 local congregations in the United States and over 25 international areas that have some type of Web presence reaching around the world.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of hours have been devoted to these local Web sites in creating, developing and maintaining the informative content. Many of the local Web sites are administrated and maintained by only one individual, while others have a team of volunteers who contribute their time.

The local Web sites not only provide a local service to the congregation but also provide a virtual footprint in the online world for those who might be searching for God's truth. Those look-

## Mixing Business With "Pleasure" (the Pleasure of Spreading the Gospel)

I own an Internet-based software company and have the freedom to advertise anything I want on my Web site. So, in March 2004, I uploaded the "Read Any Good News Lately?" URL to one of my Web site advertising slots. As my husband and I were just newly involved in the Church, I admit, I was a little worried about any backlash from customers who find mixing God with business unprofessional. But I prayed about it and finally uploaded the ad. To my surprise, the clicks on the URL started almost immediately and not one negative comment has resulted from it in two years.

Several months ago, my husband and I became aware of the brochures that the Church has made available to any of us who wish to pass them around. We thought it would be a great idea to insert them in my customer's software packages. But, when the initial 200 brochures arrived and it was time to start inserting them into my customer's orders, again, I had those little pangs of professional fear. My husband was much less shy about it and continually encouraged me to insert them.

Finally, I got my first response by way of this e-mail from one of my customers: "I purchased your software a few weeks or so ago. Opening [the box] I saw the instructions and a CD. I removed the instructions and found a brochure for a free booklet and *The Good News*. Being a Christian and placing scripture on all our company printed matter, I had to write and let you know that we are 100 percent behind what you are doing. I looked for about two weeks at different software before buying yours. I am glad that the Lord led me in your direction . . . thanks for sharing your faith."

Needless to say, I was emotionally affected with both joy that I played this little role in spreading the gospel and shame for my fear in sharing that same gospel. A few weeks later when a customer called for tech support on her software she said, "By the way, I got such a kick out of what you enclosed in my software." I wasn't quite sure what she meant until she said, "What a great way to spread the gospel, inserting your material about your faith is a very brave thing to do. That is so neat!" I was speechless!

Since uploading the "Read Any Good News Lately?" URL to my Web site two years ago, the UCG Web site has had 2,152 hits from my Web site. In January of this year, I uploaded the *Beyond Today* URL and the Church site has received 156 hits from it. I have enclosed approximately 500 brochures in my software packages on the subjects "Why Does God Allow Suffering?" and "Jesus Christ: The Real Story." Just recently, I received 100 more of each, plus 100 of "Are We Living in the Time of the End?"

I have long passed my vain fears of mixing business with pleasure. And I say "pleasure" because it is indeed a pleasure and honor, wondering if God is using my business in this small way. My delight is further enhanced as I consider that someday, in the not too distant future, I will meet some of the people who clicked on the UCG URLs from my Web site or received a brochure in their software package. It is my deepest hope at least one of them will tell me they were baptized into God's Church after responding to one of the brochures from a software package they received from my little company!

*JoAnna Buckwalter, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania*

## Spreading the Gospel Most Effectively

We hope you are as excited as we are by all the creative ways members have come up with to help preach the gospel! We also appreciate the example of all those on these pages who have worked closely with the home office in order to most efficiently and effectively do the work, properly represent the Church and meet the Council's Web site policies. Those who wish to advertise literature on their personal or business Web sites should contact Peter Eddington at [peter\\_eddington@ucg.org](mailto:peter_eddington@ucg.org). *GN* brochure ideas go to [john\\_labissoniere@ucg.org](mailto:john_labissoniere@ucg.org).

## Unsung Heroes: Spreading the Word Through Their Web Site

Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, the works I do he will do also" (John 14:12). Since one of the works Jesus did was to preach and spread the gospel, Lincoln Marini, a deacon in the Garden Grove, California, congregation, and his wife and best friend, Jean, developed an Internet Web site to provide another opportunity for God to draw people to request UCGIA literature. Later they decided to sell a few products on the site to help defray the cost.

After people order the literature on their Web site, the order is e-mailed to the UCGIA home office near Cincinnati, Ohio. The literature is then sent to the interested parties.

In six years 8,337 people from over 90 countries have responded to their Web site. Each person has received an average of 6.76 booklets and a subscription to *The Good News* magazine.

The Marinis are very honored to be involved in this process with God and the home office. It fills them with joy to hear from people who are very excited and grateful to receive the literature.

Lincoln and Jean encourage all brethren who are not already involved to get involved in one activity that preaches and spreads the gospel. The harvest is plentiful, the workers are few and the rewards are great.

*Jean Updegraff*



ing would be directed back to the Church's other Web sites for more information, to request literature or to view the latest *Beyond Today* TV program.

Some of the largest and smallest congregations around the world have developed Web sites to keep the local brethren informed of local information and provide a way for interested individuals to make contact with the Church. Many of the first-time visitors who request *The Good News* or listen to an online sermon first came in contact with the Church via a local congregation Web site.

For all who have contributed their efforts in this area, the Media and Communications Services department at the home office thanks you and appreciates your willingness to serve in preaching the gospel. If you have a local congregation Web site that is not listed at [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org), or if you would like to help develop one for your congregation, please contact Aaron Booth ([aaron\\_booth@ucg.org](mailto:aaron_booth@ucg.org)) for more information.

Aaron Booth

## Tomorrow and GN TV Volunteers Appreciated!

Much appreciation and thanks is due the brethren who produced the *Tomorrow* television (Portland, Oregon) and *Good News* television (Beloit, Wisconsin) cable-access programs. Since the inception of United, eager brethren spent many hours diligently producing video content over many years. The Media and Communications Services department felt this work was an important part of our overall media mix.

The brethren contributed to a very fine effort that improved with each taping session. We thank them for the generous support, both financial and physical, given to help further the mission of the Church.

With our new media center at the home office now operational, it has been helpful to draw upon the experience gained with *Good News* Television and

*Tomorrow* Television programming. The presenters and guests are now more prepared to contribute their talents in an even greater way, and the experience gained by everyone involved in the process has been invaluable.

Crew members participated in taping hundreds of hour and half-hour programs on weeknights and Sundays. Without their faithful and diligent efforts, these accomplishments would not have been possible!

Over the past 10 years, we saw the programs mature and improve. They went from airing on a handful of public-access stations, to airing coast-to-coast on more than 100 stations. Telephone calls from viewers resulted in thousands of pieces of literature being ordered and sent out as a result of both TV programs.

The goal from the beginning of the TV programs was to contribute to the effort of the Church in preaching the gospel about the soon-coming Kingdom of God, via public-access television. Volunteers: Thank you very much for your involvement!

Peter Eddington

## Eau Claire and St. Paul BSC Tape Program Efforts Appreciated

It is with great thanks and appreciation that we recognize the dedicated efforts and support of the Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and St. Paul, Minnesota, congregations for their invaluable work on the *Bible Study Course* graduate tape program.

It is through the dedicated support and effort of volunteers like these that United is able to reach far beyond its normal capabilities. The Word of God is able to be preached and sown in a much greater way due to their tireless work. We realize that it has been a project that has gone on for a number of years (since 2001), and we thank them for staying the course.

Over the next six months we will systematically phase out the *Bible*

*Study Course* graduate tape program. We feel the program has born some very good fruit, but our operating costs for this particular program are quite high and we would like to shift some of this budget toward Internet promotion of the gospel message—which is one of our most cost-effective tools.

Thousands of *Bible Study Course* graduates have gone through the tape program, and some are now attending Sabbath services. Interestingly, 34 percent of these graduates also request more material from us after completing the tape program, so it has been of value. It's simply a matter of shifting funds as we endeavor to be wise stewards with the resources God has given us.

We thank these brethren once again for their involvement. It has not gone unnoticed! In fact, depending on needs in the future, we may just call on them again! Their professional service has been invaluable.

Peter Eddington



Clockwise: Corpus Christi/Victoria, Texas, brethren had a rummage sale for the Good Works Program, one of dozens of fund-raisers that have been held around the world; the new Good Works-funded church hall and office in Migori, Kenya; and Donato Mogar, a disabled longtime member of the Church in the Philippines, received help setting up this store. He lost his former job as secretary of the local government because the meetings are now held on Saturdays

for the budgeted expenditures of the Church in carrying out its commission). Instead, the program was created to receive the monies that brethren are able to generate through local fund-raising efforts.

Those brethren who have the wherewithal to engage in local fund-raising projects have contributed over \$300,000 since the Council of Elders established the Church's Good Works Program less than three years ago. As a result, brethren have been able to help with over 30 projects that have benefited others in the Church in countries all around the world—in Africa, Asia, Latin America and North America (where some suffered significant loss from Hurricane Katrina). Brethren have been involved in all

sorts of fund-raisers, including production of a cookbook, car washes, penny rolls, benefit concerts, bake sales and many more. On behalf of those who have been helped, thanks to all who have volunteered and helped in this way!

Tom Kirkpatrick

## VCM Produced by Volunteers

*Virtual Christian Magazine* (found on the Web at [www.vcmagazine.org](http://www.vcmagazine.org)) is a volunteer publication. The staff and writers are a group of people that, for the most part, have never met. They communicate and produce the magazine completely through the Internet.

Volunteer staff members include: editors—Michelle Grovak, Gayle Hoefker, Jada Howell, Patrick Kansa, David Meidinger, Suzanne Morgan, John Rutus, Amy Stephens and Debbie Werner; reviewers—Jack Elliott, Eric Evans, Don Henson, Don Hooser and Leroy Neff; webmaster—Chris Rowland; and graphics and managing editor—Lorelei Nettles.

VCM welcomes articles from members. All submissions can be e-mailed to Lorelei Nettles through the feedback link at the site.

Lorelei Nettles

## Ministerial Services Thanks Members

"Every week thousands of brethren serve behind the scenes to make Sabbath services a place where we can all meet and be taught God's truths," said Jim Franks, Ministerial Services operation manager. "We wanted to express our deep gratitude for the wonderful spirit of service you have shown in setting up the halls, the sound systems, providing music, caring for our widows and widowers, preparing for socials and doing all the things that make the local congregation a pleasant place for learning and fellowshiping."

"Sometimes we don't always hear a 'well done' as we quietly go about taking care of these needs, but God appreciates all you do on His behalf," Mr.

## Unsung Hero: Caring for Those With Cancer

Our unsung hero is one of our deaconesses, Sandy Saurbaugh, of the Bloomington/Normal, Illinois, congregation.

When Sandy was widowed, she started searching for areas of service. She and her husband had been very active in serving the Church and community. Now she started a new phase of her life and service was a natural interest for her.

Her latest gift of volunteering is with the Hematology Association of Central Illinois. Association volunteers do a variety of services. Their focus is to brighten the lives of cancer patients while they are going through this challenging time. They help them with information and bring them lunch when they are hooked up to chemo for several hours. They become caring friends. Sandy mentioned the ultimate expression of generosity is not in giving of what you have, but in giving of who you are. Cancer patients need people who care, listen and brighten their day at a very difficult time. Sandy quietly serves in so many other ways, but this project has given her an opportunity to show love and service to those in great need.

This same group also has another helpful project: Cancer awareness bracelets. The volunteers, like Sandy, have made thousands of bracelets. All the money after expenses goes to the cancer patients with financial need. Some need help with payment of prescriptions, lunch money and money for transportation. The money is used to take one more burden off the patient.

Phyllis Knochel



## Unsung Hero: Sharing the Joy of Music

Jean-Paul Gorisse is a member of the United Church of God in France. He is a musician who helped in the creation of the Church hymnal in the French language.

In 2002, he felt strongly motivated to create a high-quality musical CD of all the hymns with beautiful arrangements and donated more than 300 of them to families attending the Feast in France in 2003, and to scattered members who use it for services on the Sabbath. In 2004, he put together an album of the numerous pieces of special music he has performed over the years, and donated it to each family present at the Feast in Annecy.

Jean-Paul comes from a family of musicians. He came in contact with the Church while serving a three-year term in the French army musical corps. He won a gold medal in 1976 during the national conservatory competition.

This medal opened the door for him to obtain a teaching post with the Musical Conservatory of Blois, a large town a couple hours south of Paris. However, he was called in the Church that year and had to leave his position because of the Sabbath. For the next three years, Jean-Paul experienced much difficulty finding a job for the same reason. He was unemployed and took various small jobs unrelated to his love of music.

However, in 1979, his perseverance was blessed and he was offered a job as a music school director in Louvrou, France, where he has been for the last 25 years directing more than 200 students and 11 teachers. The school gained a very good reputation for its quality.

Jean-Paul met Odile Carre, a young lady in the Church in Belgium, and they married in 1983. They joined United in 1996. Over the years, Jean-Paul has accompanied hymns at Church, organized vocal groups and choirs for the Church and has performed special music many times. He plays the saxophone, the recorder, the piano, classical guitar and the synthesizer. We are thankful for his generous contribution in sharing his talent for the benefit of the Church.

Maryse Pebworth

Franks said. "Ministerial Services and all our pastors and elders thank you so much for your time and effort!"

All the activities of the local congregations—from Sabbath services to socials—contribute to developing us as a people prepared for God.

Many congregations have 30 or more responsibilities necessary to help the congregation run smoothly. This can be quite challenging in congregations with less than 30 people, but in the larger congregations, the number of responsibilities and people needed grows as well.

Here are just a few of the tasks handled by unsung heroes in the congregations: announcement brochures, bulletin board, cards for the sick, flowers, greeters, "Local Church Updates" reports and photos for *United News*, meals for the sick and shut-ins, mothers'

room, piano players, providing rides, Sabbath school teachers, sermonettes, set up and take down, social committees,

song leaders, sound crew, special music, tape library, teen activities, teen Bible studies and ushers.

## Unsung Heroes: Making It Look Easy!

Our Cincinnati East social committee serves us all, making every social special, fresh and fun. Every aspect is carefully planned and implemented in a smooth fashion so that the volunteers all function well together. Decorations are always unique and interesting and theme-oriented.

Those who have been on social committees in other locations instantly recognize how our local committee makes it seem so effortless to execute such a variety of socials for all ages in all seasons. If it looks easy, you know a lot of planning went into the event.

The children love the costume parties they plan year after year, with active games that are enjoyed by all ages. Certain committee members have a gift for directing the children graciously, while maintaining order with a pleasant pace from one activity to another. The whole social committee does a great job and just keeps on going with great new ideas of how to mix food, fun and fellowship!

John McClain

## Unsung Hero: Inspiring Young Readers

Elsie Pate is a 76-year-old widow and serves as a deaconess in the Salem congregation. She has six children, 16 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren! After 16 years, she is "retiring" this year from her volunteer service to spend more time with her family.

Elsie has been honored several times for her many years of exceptional community service, including receiving the Vocational Service in Education Award from the local Capital Sunrise Rotary Club.

Beginning at age 60, in the fall of 1990, Elsie Pate answered her local school district's plea for volunteers. Throughout her 16 years of outstanding volunteer service to the school district, Elsie's specialty has been tutoring first grade students in development of reading skills.

In addition, Elsie Pate's service as an all-around volunteer has been both valuable and inspirational. Her additional service has included substituting for other tutors, greeting students at the door in the mornings, helping plan and run special events, helping with the School Saving program, preparing classroom materials and inventing games to inspire struggling readers.



John Cafourek

## Want to Serve More? Increase Your Talents!

United's congregations, youth camps and regional activities have great needs for people with specific experience and qualifications. You can do more when you learn more.

by Don Hooser

Good news: United Church of God has had more than enough volunteers to work on our summer and winter camp staffs! Sad news: Our camp directors have to disappoint many fine, enthusiastic applicants when they have to be turned down.

Why are their applications turned down? Because there are enough other applicants who have more experience, better qualifications and more certifications. The solution if you want to work for a camp: get more experience and specialized training.

Likewise, you may be wondering how you can serve more in your local congregation. There are some things that every member can and should do, such as being friendly and encouraging to everyone and praying for people. But you may wish there were more you could do besides offering people transportation and helping to set up the chairs.

The answer to all of these desires is to

make yourself more valuable. "Talents" should not be thought of only as inherited artistic talents or supernatural gifts. Think of a talent as any acquired ability that gives you a specific way to serve. So increase your credentials. Add to your abilities. Reinforce your résumé.

God called us to serve and to serve to the greatest extent we are able. Please be aware that the Church has a very serious need for all kinds of capable leaders and servants. And there is great satisfaction in serving. Jesus Christ said, "There is more happiness in giving than in receiving" (Acts 20:35, TEV).

In God's Church, the most important quality for anyone is having good character and being close to God. We need people "of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3). But on top of that foundation, there is much we can do to increase our skills.

The purpose of this article is to give you ideas. For further ideas concerning the many needs at UCG camps, please see the *United Youth Camps 2006 Magazine*. If you are interested in any of these areas, it is easy to learn how and where to obtain the training.

**Song leading, sermonettes, sermons, teaching Sabbath School:** Learn and practice. Increase your public speaking ability through participation in congregational or community speaking clubs. Take advantage of opportunities to speak before groups. Learn your lan-

guage well. For song-leading and choir-directing, learn to read music and practice.

**Musical accompaniment for hymn singing:** Learn to play a musical instrument to be an accompanist or to play in a church ensemble. Since most assembly halls have a piano and since most of us are accustomed to singing with a piano accompaniment, the most valuable and versatile musical ability in our churches is piano playing. A pianist is a wonderful asset to a congregation, and pianists can be male or female, young or old. Encourage children to learn piano. Also many people learn to play after becoming an adult. One doesn't need to be able to play all the hymns before starting to accompany hymns.

**Audio and video needs:** Sometimes I think the most important person in a congregation is the one who knows how to run the sound system. If you can't hear, what good is a church service!

**Computer needs:** Every congregation desperately needs at least one computer guru. He or she is like the savior of the day when you need help. And if you want to have a congregational Web site, you certainly need a webmaster. If you have the aptitude for computer stuff and are willing to help Church members, please learn relevant computer skills and share what you learn.

**Refereeing and coaching sports:** The quality of our local and regional

sports programs depends greatly on our having qualified referees and coaches. Obtaining training and experience in these areas gives one the opportunity to be a much appreciated leader in youth and adult sports.

**Hospitality:** It may be advantageous to move closer to town or buy a larger house. But the main thing that is needed are people who love people and whose hearts are "given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13).

**Certification in first aid and/or emergency preparedness:** A person trained in first aid who has some basic first aid supplies can be needed at any time and any place. First aid certification is required for many leadership positions in camp sporting activities. First aid usually includes knowledge of CPR and even defibrillation. Red Cross courses are available in most areas.

**Lifeguard certification:** It often is necessary to have a certified lifeguard if a congregation plans to have a swimming or boating activity. A person needs this certification not just when he plans to serve as a lifeguard at a pool or waterfront. He also usually needs it to be a teacher or supervisor in any aquatic sport.

**Boating safety:** To teach or supervise boating sports (canoeing, kayaking, water-skiing, etc.) usually requires training in boating safety as well as lifeguarding.

**Teaching any sport or activity:** A teacher must first be well taught. The more training and experience you have had in a skill, the more likely you will be chosen to teach that activity at a camp. And official certifications can be earned in many sports.

"Sports" at our camps include a wide variety of experiences: dancing, ropes courses, rock climbing, rappelling, softball, basketball, flag football, speed-away, golf, archery, riflery, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, water-skiing, fishing, hiking, camping, outdoor cooking, survival skills, orienteering, biking, horseback riding, ice skating, crafts and journalism.

So, you want to teach a sport? Learn the sport. Get training and experience. In some cases, it's advantageous to obtain certification. Some ideas about available courses and certifications can be obtained from the American Camp Association Web site, [www.aca-camps.org](http://www.aca-camps.org).

One way to gain valuable experience for working at youth camps is to first work at preteen camps.

Looking for still other ways to serve? Be Mr. or Ms. Fix-it. Everyone needs repairs at times. Another way? Buy a pickup truck and be willing to haul stuff. Everyone will love you. These are just some of the hundreds of ways you can serve and help the Church in the mission God has given us to do. UN

### "Houston," continued from page 1

The weekend's activities began with a Friday evening reception. Everyone was treated to a memory-filled slide presentation, after which Wayne Cole, David Treybig, Ken Treybig, Burk McNair, Clyde Kilough, Larry Salyer, Frank McCrady II, Harold Rhodes, Don Waterhouse, Leroy Neff, David Johnson, Ken Giese, Jim Franks and Tom Kirkpatrick shared personal memories of their times in Houston. Ed Marrs and Dave Myers were unable to attend, but sent messages that were read aloud.

The common thread among their memories seemed to be not only Houston's ongoing traffic and road construc-



Melvin and Shirley Scott dance at Houston's 50th anniversary (photo by Sharon VanSchuyver)

tion, but also their sincere thanks to the Houston congregations for what the membership meant to them. Another

warning sentiment was how many of these ministers still consider Houston "home."

The activities continued Sabbath morning with a brunch, followed by services. Houston South pastor Kenneth Giese narrated a historical slide show that began with the introduction of the 14 members who attended the first Houston service, and graduated to the developments of the present day.

Five special music numbers followed the presentation, as well as a sermon by ex-Houstonian and current UCG president, Clyde Kilough. Mr. Kilough brought old notebooks of past sermons that he shared with the group. He

summed up his message with "Remember the past, take stock and move forward."

The evening allowed additional fellowship over drinks, followed by a first-class dinner and dance. In an effort to work off all of the delectable goodies, upbeat tunes began the evening's dance

and went on well into the night, with music provided by deejay Arnold Mendez Jr.



Five who were at the first Houston service: David, Ken and Jeanette Treybig and Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Cole (photo by George Foshee)

Countless hours and organizers came together to make this rather ambitious event such an unequivocal success. UN



## From the Word

# Child-Rearing Tips From the Ten Commandments

■ Many parents today are bewildered by the prospect of rearing children at the frenetic pace and with the conflicting messages of the 21st century. But there is ancient wisdom that can help.

by Larry W. Greider

Screaming at the top of his little but powerful lungs was a belligerent toddler blocking the aisle of the department store. I thought about offering some help or advice, but when I saw the embarrassed, frazzled mom, I knew the timing was probably not good.

The department store was probably not the best place to learn vital principles to help in the increasingly challenging job of parenting. But where can parents find the tips that will make a real difference in their children's lives?



Certainly not in the world around us. Today, the most common emphasis appears to be on accommodating the needs and even the wants and desires of children. Sophisticated advertisements suggest that any new and exciting toy, movie or opportunity should be offered to those who "want it." (Many are persuaded they need it . . .) The long-term best interests of the child seem to be forgotten.

Parenting is truly an art and many would suggest there isn't one way to bring up a child to become a fully functional adult who is confident and competent.

Did you know that the Bible says differently? "If a child is trained up in the right way, even when he is old

he will not be turned away from it" (Proverbs 22:6, Bible in Basic English). The New King James Version says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

There is a way, a right way, to teach a young mind how to succeed in life. You don't need the latest psychology or a ton of toys; you basically need to imitate the amazing formula contained within the laws of God.

### The Ten Commandments

The timeless Ten Commandments are filled with practical advice for parents, teachers and any who want to live a long and productive life. These amazing laws have even been reduced down to almost a sound bite. Christ said the first great commandment (which could encapsulate the first four commandments listed in Exodus 20) is to love God with all your heart, soul and mind. The second is to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40).

Let's analyze this advice, remembering that God is the ultimate par-



sands of years when it comes to relationships.

As cultures change, they almost always drift away from absolutes, choosing instead to accept humanistic thinking. These situational ethics (often called postmodernism) allow for people to do what they feel is right and often find out too late that the maker of human life has created absolute laws to govern all life. There is an effect to every choice we make.

### Foundational Advice—Tell the Truth

Of great importance is truthfulness. To learn of God is to learn of the truth! If one were to always tell the truth and live the truth, he would ultimately have a relationship with God, who personifies truth (John 14:6).

Here are some suggestions for helping your children become truth-oriented:

- Always insist on the truth.
- Don't lie to your children, even about myths, fairy tales, the tooth fairy, Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, etc.
- Reward your children for being truthful and be consistent in challenging untruths.
- Explain to your child that even though telling the truth could be painful and indicting, it will lead to a most important character trait—honesty! Note: It has been said that if you always tell the truth, you don't have to remember what you said.
- Don't entrap your child. If you know your child has said or done something requiring correction, respond to it immediately without the common, "Did you do/say . . .?"

which often provokes a denial in an effort to refrain from incurring a penalty.

### Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

This second great commandment, which is the distillation of the last six of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20, shows us how to order our lives to offer others the same consideration we would want for ourselves.

We should treat others the way we would want them to treat us. Therefore, we don't dishonor, hate or kill others, defraud someone's future mate or take or covet what is not ours. This implies a work ethic, thrift and patience.

It sounds amazing that much of what is needed to rear children can come from ten rather short com-

is as basic as it gets.

The daily contact we have with our heavenly Father is a wonderful way to tap into the wisdom needed to make difficult choices and to seek the protection and insights all parents need. When children see your example of asking for help, you demonstrate that, in the same manner, yielding to you for their needs is natural.

Perhaps the most common mistakes parents can make are feeling they are self-sufficient for the role of bringing up their children or that it doesn't matter, as kids will figure life out as they grow up.

However, there is a way that really works! It's a way as sure as the laws that sustain the universe, causing the sun to rise and the rain to fall from the sky. God's laws, framed by the commandments, are an invaluable resource to explain cause and

*Reading the Bible and telling Bible stories is a fascinating way to impart a value-based morality that clearly shows cause and effect. Children who have such benchmark formulas have a huge head start on life. The Bible illustrates cause and effect, and little has changed in thousands of years when it comes to relationships.*

mands that can be further shortened to two basic principles of living.

### Be a Godly Parent

If you want to be a good parent, you need to have God foremost in your life. There is no doubt that child rearing is a difficult, complex task in the complicated world of the 21st century. However, successful parents learn to put first things first. Having a relationship with the creator God and sharing that with your children

effect. God said to the first child, "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it" (Genesis 4:7).

Giving our children the clarity of right and wrong, cause and effect, allows them to choose wisely, having confidence that there is a way to live life. For more information on tips about parenting, check the Web site [www.ucg.org/youth](http://www.ucg.org/youth). UN

# Passing the Baton: Can You Help Us?

■ Mature and seasoned members can play an important part in the Church's efforts to mentor and begin passing the baton of leadership to our younger generation.

by Richard Pinelli

This period in the history of God's Church finds us facing a challenge—one of ministerial manpower. As our ministry and Church leadership grow older, we need to prepare the next generation to take over our responsibilities within the Church. If we truly understand the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6 concerning turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, we then must understand this to be one of the most important responsibilities entrusted to any group of people.

Ever since the days of Jesus Christ and the apostles, God's work has always been hindered by a shortage of qualified workers. As Jesus said: "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Many of us see this as the need for new donors, coworkers, members and even ministers.

God's Church may have entered into its most critical period in witnessing, warning and calling to conversion those individuals God wants to turn to the hearts of the fathers.

So, how can you help us? Many of you have been in God's Church for 30, 40 and 50 years. You have been sound, solid and faithful members. You have been a wonderful support system living and serving as examples, servants and leaders. Often we have wanted to say, "Thank you for fulfilling these very important responsibilities. Keep up the good work!"

But your most important work and service may still be ahead of you. Can

you help us? Let me tell you what need I see.

## Mentoring in the Old Testament

In Numbers 8:24-26 we read how God organized the Levitical priesthood. From age 25 to 30 the young men were mentored in the service of the tabernacle and temple. From age 30 to 50 they did the hard work of serving in the tabernacle and temple, handling the sacrifices, washings and all the areas of worship. From age 50 until death they continued to function as priests, but not in the extremely hard work of the temple.

*Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's Commentary* said they became mentors to the younger, "instructing, directing, and superintending important trusts."

Ephesians 4:11-16 talks about ministering (not just ordained ministers) to the Body of Christ. "But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies" (verses 15-16).

## Your Challenge

I am asking you to go one step further than most of you have gone. I am challenging each of you to follow the example and precedent God gave the Levitical priesthood. Since many of us are aging, I'd like to remind you of how important it is to think in terms of preparing those who may be replacing you and me as future servants, leaders, deacons/deaconesses and elders.

Can we begin to mentor the next generation by interacting with the younger members of the Church, by developing relationships with them, by involving them in responsibilities, by teaching and mentoring them as Paul told Titus in Titus 2:6-8?

Not only did Paul admonish Timothy to "hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me" (2 Tim-

othy 1:13), but he went on to say, "and the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Paul was instructing Timothy to mentor future leaders for the Church. In essence Paul was telling Timothy to prepare men who would in time replace himself and other leaders in their Church duties.

Since the Levitical priests gave their jobs away by passing the baton to and nurturing the younger ones to serve as they did, can you and I follow that example by *passing on* our responsibilities to the next generation? You and I are a part of a foundational generation Christ used to preserve His truth from heresy, and now our duty is to prepare the next generation to fill our jobs and responsibilities within the Church.

I count myself blessed to have attended the early years of Ambassador College. It was there that I had the opportunity to sit at the feet of Herbert W. Armstrong to hear about his many experiences and to learn how he handled so many things in the Church. Many of these experiences were later written in his autobiography.

Many a winter's night while I was driving in the outback of Canada, these examples came back to my mind like a flashback. Without having heard Mr. Armstrong's experiences, it would have been almost impossible for me to make some of the decisions necessary as a church pastor.

## Finding Future Leaders

In our attempt to identify potential leaders and ministers, we have surveyed the ministry for names of the leaders in the local congregations. We have surveyed the ABC instructors to see which graduates have potential to serve the Church. We have followed up with the graduates of our Leadership Workshop program, and we have also surveyed the

camp directors to learn who has demonstrated leadership among the camp staff.

We are doing what we can to identify future leaders for the Church. The next step will be to mentor and prepare them for more service.

God is calling us all to service. This mission continues through a process of conversion that requires us to serve God and others. Our young adults are a vital and valued part of the Church, and God wants us to be developing potential leaders.

The Church is committed to helping young people connect with the work of the Church. Unfortunately, we've heard of some cases where our young adults have wanted to serve, but they've actually been discouraged from serving by someone saying, "that's my responsibility." Some young adults may want to serve, but they're afraid to or lack confidence to ask if they can help with certain responsibilities.

If we are to follow the biblical example of mentoring the next generation for service, we need to give these young people a chance to show they are a valued part of the Church, and that we recognize them as our future leaders.

Here in the home office congregation, we have begun to reach out to involve and to train our young adults. Last year we started a Beginner's Sermonette Class. We invited all the men who wanted to learn to give sermonettes. No promises were made to put them in the pulpit, but they were given a chance to gain experience in speaking so that, if they went out into an area where they could serve in this way, they would be ready.

Twenty-three men volunteered for this class, and most were under 30 years of age. In this year's class we have more than 30 men (of which 13 are ABC students), and again the men are predominantly under 30 years old. This is only a beginning.

## The Law of Legacy

In John Maxwell's book *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* he writes something important for all of us to understand at this time in the Church. Law #21 is the last and perhaps most important law, "The Law of Legacy—A Leader's Lasting Value Is Measured by Succession."

He said: "In 1997, one of the finest business leaders in the world died. His name was Roberto Goizueta, and he was the chairman and chief executive of the Coca-Cola Company. Making Coca-Cola the best company in the world was Goizueta's lifelong quest, one he was still pursuing diligently when he suddenly, unexpectedly died" (page 215).

Paine Webber analyst Emanuel Goldman said that Goizueta "prepared the company for his not being there as well as any executive I've ever seen." How did he do it? First, by making the com-



pany as strong as he possibly could. Second, by preparing a successor for the top position (page 216).

Maxwell, in his concluding remark on this 21st law, stated: "When all is said and done, your ability as a leader will not be judged by what you achieved personally or even by what your team accomplished during your tenure. You will be judged by how well your people and your organization did after you were gone. You will be gauged according to the Law of Legacy. Your lasting value will be measured by succession."

Maxwell writes this in his book *Leadership Promises for Every Day* concerning Moses and Joshua, "Of all the wonderful ways Moses expressed his leadership, the most strategic had to be his training of Joshua. He gave Joshua his time, his insight, a learning environment, an opportunity to prove himself and a strong belief in his future. The interaction of Moses and Joshua demonstrates that reproducing leaders is not a quick, simple process. It requires time, emotional investment and sacrifice."

"When you begin developing the next generation of leaders, recognize that your protégés will need certain things:

- "1. From themselves: conviction, courage and obedience
  - "2. From their mentor: equipping
  - "3. From God: vision
  - "4. From the people: buy-in
- "With time, investment and sacrifice, you will build a legacy of leadership."

## Passing the Baton

Maxwell is describing the vital importance of mentoring. You and I, brethren, are part of a foundational generation Christ used to preserve His truth. We also have our part in passing the baton of truth to our younger people by our rock solid beliefs and examples.

Please also remember the biblical example of the Levites mentoring the younger generation for their service to God and to the nation of Israel. We also have the responsibility of preparing the next generation for service and leadership in God's Church. Yes, you can help us by what you are doing today and by following the suggestions in the sidebar, "Can You Help Us? Some Ideas."

Remember what Christ said, "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:38).

God has His part to do in this process, and so do we. Can you help? UN

## Can You Help Us? Some Ideas

Many younger members, young adults and teens would be very happy to help if they knew the needs and felt welcome to volunteer. Others would be excited to help if they were asked.

But when everything seems to be going smoothly at church and help isn't solicited, it can take more courage and initiative for a young person to volunteer.

What can the senior members do to encourage and welcome more involvement from the younger ones? What can you do to help mentor the next generation?

Here are some ideas:

- Ask for help, either in person or in an announcement. If you are giving someone a ride every week, or running the sound system every week, see if there are younger people who would be happy to help or be trained to help.
- Talk about various members' needs. Maybe an elderly or infirmed member's lawn needs mowed, leaves need raked or sidewalks need snow shoveled off them. Ask for help for a work party for home improvement projects such as painting.
- Organize a program to visit elderly people and shut-ins. Encourage younger members to get involved. Help them get to know each other and feel comfortable with each other.
- Invite a younger person to come along when you visit brethren who are hospitalized or homebound.
- Work together to give a fatherless child some time and attention.
- Are there computer savvy young people in your area? Let them know how much they are needed! Maybe suggest they set up a team to help older members with their computer needs.
- If a young person expresses an interest in serving in the Church, suggest he or she ask the pastor what areas he thinks could use some help.
- Suggest expanding the committees for socials and fund-raisers to include more younger people.
- Everyone needs encouragement. Ask for the gift of encouragement and look for ways to use it. Give encouragement during the week, not just on the Sabbath.
- Be a friend. Give an ear. Communicate with and invite to your home or out to dinner the younger generation coming along in God's Church.

# "I Was Happy Where I Was!"

by Bruce Gore

Recently, my son-in-law sent me a few pictures of our new granddaughter, Sarah Davidson. They were taken within minutes of her birth. She had a big frown on her face. She appeared very annoyed. Her expression seemed to be saying, "I was happy where I was! Why didn't you leave me alone?"

A day earlier, her life had been perfect. She lay around in a reclining position, suspended in a seemingly weightless aquatic environment. Food as needed, perfect temperature all the time—what more could she want? Certainly not the ordeal she had just gone through as she was thrust from her wonderful little cocoon!

## The Trauma of Birth

Have you ever thought about the trauma a baby must go through to be born? What if a baby could speak and reason in the womb? Someone says to her, "Well, it's time to go."

"Go? Where? Why?"

"Don't you want to leave?"

"No! Life is great here! Leave me alone."

Birth—change—is traumatic for a baby, but what a future it opens. How limited life would be if she could and did continue on where she was.

A whole new life has opened to Sarah that she otherwise would never have enjoyed. Two little brothers couldn't wait to kiss her little cheeks, and a grandmother couldn't wait to coo and cuddle her. Then there's rope jumping, swinging, strawberry ice cream, love, marriage and motherhood itself!

## Resisting Change

Our lives can become a lot like an unborn baby. We can get used to and comfortable in our own lifestyle and our jobs, and when something new and different comes up, we may not want to step into it because it is strange and different from what we are used to.

People stay in terrible abusive relationships because it is all they know. It is the familiar, and in their own way they have learned to cope with the pain. They prefer this to the unknown. They don't believe things could be so much better.

God has called us to a new life—to forever—to the Kingdom of God! In order to participate in it, He says a rebirth must take place for us. We must be born again, from above—a spiritual birth.

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3, 5).

The birthing process requires leaving one place behind and moving on to something new. It's putting the past behind us and stepping into a new life, one where the Spirit and Word of God guide us. For some that can be a little scary. It's the unknown, the unfamiliar.

Yet, realize that this present physical life is just as limited as that of an unborn baby compared to what God wants us to experience as His children.

Christ said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Many whom God is calling to be a part of His family are hesitant, procrastinat-



Sarah Davidson soon after birth

ing—perhaps satisfied with their life as it is, yet not knowing how much they are limiting themselves. There is a future so great that can be ours if we're willing to reach out and take hold of it.

"But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him'" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

"Come on in, the Water's Fine!"

Years ago, the kids in our community used to enjoy Sunday afternoon

swims in a creek that was a little colder than most. Some would stand on the bank hesitant about getting in until finally urged by others who'd yell, "Come on in, the water's fine!" If you haven't, maybe it's time for you to jump in—this new life is great. Many others are enjoying it.

Of course, this subject of being willing to change and accepting change doesn't end with baptism. We are called to a way of life that requires constant change to become more and more like Christ.

Sarah's adapting pretty well to her new environment. She's met a lot of nice people. They're surprisingly responsive to her wishes and needs—treating her like the little princess she is! She's quickly learning what a special little person she is. Already, I don't think she wants to go back where she was! UN

*Bruce Gore is the regional pastor of the Southeast region.*

# Metamorphosis: A New Creation

Very hungry caterpillars becoming beautiful butterflies illustrate the change God has called us to.

by Andy McClain

The children's book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* colorfully details the life of a caterpillar as it changes into a beautiful butterfly. We have read this book to our two sons many times. The story describes a wonderful process called metamorphosis.

*Webster's* dictionary defines *metamorphosis* as "a change of physical form, structure, or substance especially by supernatural means" or "a striking alteration in appearance, character or circumstances." The online encyclopedia, *Wikipedia*, adds that it "involves significant change in form as well as growth" and it "usually accompanies a change of habitat or of habits." Through metamorphosis, the caterpillar becomes a totally new creation.

Metamorphosis compares to the process of change that we undergo in becoming God's begotten children. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

He actually uses a term from which we get the word *metamorphosis* in Romans 12:2: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." The word *transformed* is in the Greek *metamorphoo*, and it means undergoing a profound transformation. So we also must become completely changed into a new

creation by developing the mind and character of God.

The butterfly has four stages of life: egg, larva, pupa and adult. The larva is what we refer to as the caterpillar. Other names for caterpillars include inchworm, fruit worm, silkworm or even woolly bear.

Many caterpillars are not very beautiful. A caterpillar is a very small creature that we would probably overlook if we were walking through a forest. Many of us might try to squash it or flick it away if we did see one.

Like this tiny creature, we are not much of and by ourselves either. King David expressed this when he said, "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people" (Psalm 22:6). He also said, "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalm 8:4).

If we continue to verse 5, we learn that God has a design for us. David says, "For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor." Remember that God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" in Genesis 1:26. We are to become like God in our character and nature. But we need help.

## Eating Machines

Aptly called eating machines, the caterpillar's daily agenda is simple: eat, eat, avoid being eaten and eat. They have perhaps the fastest growth rate of any animal in the world. A tobacco hornworm, for example, increases its own weight 10,000 times in less than 20 days. The monarch increases its mass by 30,000 times as a caterpillar.

Caterpillars do not have very good eyesight or senses. They rely on their

antenna to help them locate food since they only have six tiny simple eyes on the lower portion of their head.

For us to change, we must eat a diet of God's truth. Like the caterpillar, we also do not "see" well. Because our nature is totally against God, He must first draw us to Him (Romans 8:7-8; John 6:44, 65). God then convicts us of our sin and grants us repentance (John 16:8; Acts 11:18). Upon repentance, God then forgives us (1 John 1:9-10). Finally, God gives us the desire to learn His ways and to submit our will to Him (Philippians 2:13).

Only after we repent and become baptized—physical, outward signs of our choice to follow God—can we make the choice to serve God through obedience. Then, we begin our lifelong process to completely change ourselves with God's help. We become the begotten children of God through the receipt of God's Holy Spirit within our mind.

As such, we should labor "for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give" (John 6:26-27). This food can be found in God's truth. Christ says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

We partake of this bread by continuing in our commitment to serve God in obedience and also by incorporating God's laws into our lives. The Message translation reads, "Here's how we can be sure that we know God in the right way: Keep his commandments. If someone claims, 'I know him well!' but doesn't keep his commandments, he's obviously a liar. His life doesn't match his words" (1 John 2:3-4).

## Shedding the Old Ways

In order to accommodate growth, the larva must molt, or shed, its skin multiple times. Caterpillars mature through a series of stages, called instars. Near the end of each instar, the larva molts the old skin and the new skin rapidly forms. The process is very similar to the way a snake sheds its skin when its body outgrows the skin. A caterpillar typically sheds its skin five times during the larval stage. Development of butterfly wing patterns begins by the last larval instar.

For us to change, we must take on a new mind and shed our former way of life. God tells us quite bluntly that "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). In Ephesians 4:22, we are told to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."

When we take in God's Word and apply it in our life, it will help us to be "renewed in the spirit of your mind" and take on the "new man . . . created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:23-24).

God gives us encouraging words from Isaiah that read, "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10-11). God will help us to make the necessary changes to take on His character.

## Waiting for Change

When the larva is fully grown, it will stop feeding and start searching for a

safe place, sometimes up to 30 to 40 feet away, usually the underside of a leaf. Once there, the caterpillar sheds its last skin and forms a chrysalis. Then it must wait. This pupa stage may last for nine to 12 days, but some species take many months to a year.

Just like the caterpillar patiently waits in the chrysalis, we must wait for our total change to occur. Job says that "all the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes" (Job 14:14).

That waiting can be a challenge. As we try to incorporate God's principles and values within our lives in this evil world, "we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body," as Paul states in Romans 8:23.

We know that "the hour is coming," as Jesus Christ said when discussing the resurrections in John 5:25-29. We look forward to this dramatic change that will bring about "the revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19).

Within the chrysalis, a true miracle takes place. The caterpillar's mouth parts go from being those required for chewing to the butterfly's strawlike tongue used for sipping nectar from flowers. A creepy, crawling insect totally changes in into a beautiful, flying butterfly.

Nothing signals the emergence of the butterfly from its chrysalis. The chrysalis suddenly cracks open and out comes the butterfly. The tiny, crumpled wings quickly become full-sized, dry and ready for flying within about an hour. A once ugly caterpillar has been transformed into a new creation.

At Christ's return, we will be miraculously changed into God's spiritual children (1 Corinthians 15:50-58). Supernaturally, through the power of God's Holy Spirit, we, like the caterpillar, will become a new creation. UN

*The author is from the Indianapolis, Indiana, congregation.*

# Using the Holy Spirit—Smug Security or Creative Risk?

■ The Holy Spirit makes possible the development of righteous character. But comfortable complacency can mean a smug security instead of extending oneself. The parable of the talents helps explain the difference.

by Graemme Marshall

In the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Jesus teaches that we should be in a state of expectancy for His return (Matthew 25:1-13). The illustration that follows, the parable of the talents, shows what we should be doing while awaiting that return.

Christ gave the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to make possible spiritual growth. He takes care to provide all the necessary tools. He committed to His Church authority and gave His truth, laws and future promises, plus the invisible Divine power to accomplish spiritual growth.

The talents are expressed in monetary terms, but refer to spiritual values. For our purpose, let's accept a talent as a thousand dollars. Christ's rich gifts are, however, purchased in His blood—something far beyond monetary value. Christ came as our Savior. Firstfruit Christians are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit and are to be busy using that Spirit to grow and transform.

The parable explains the Kingdom of God. "It's also like a man going off on an extended trip. He called his servants together and delegated responsibilities. To one he gave five thousand dollars, to another two thousand, to a third one thousand, depending on their abilities. Then he left" (Matthew 25:14-15, The Message paraphrase used throughout).

By the uniqueness of birth each of us has different abilities, mental processes and physical and spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit influences and provides an unseen power for the spiritual use of our natural abilities. This spiritual investment is to be put to good use according to our individual ability from birth and from later training in life. God doesn't place a heavier burden on our shoulders than we can bear. He gives us a task, and we are to get on with it.

As Christians, we all have different opportunities and capacities, dispositions and personalities. Our situations are not identical. This shows that Christ knows us individually—knows our temperaments, our strengths, abilities, family obligations, personal skills and mental skill. No other human knows precisely what another's responsibility is. But each is ultimately responsible to Christ at the judgment.

## Two Servants Did Well

"Right off, the first servant went to work and doubled his master's investment. The second did the same" (verses 16-17).

These two servants doubled their spiritual capital, and Christ was happy

with what each accomplished. They went and traded—immediately got busy. They applied themselves to their task. They lost no time. There was work to be done in transforming their hearts, attitudes, thinking and choices in life.

Having made right spiritual investment choices, they continued in that direction. They sought the Kingdom first, sublimated personal desires and dedicated everything in their life to honor God's calling and way of life. They took risks in their personal lives (time and money) to make sure they could attend Church services, fellowship, help spread the gospel, be involved in Church activities and grow in Bible study and prayer.

This was their main focus. It had a personal cost. It involved a risk. They were prepared to pay it. They developed themselves spiritually. From novices at baptism, through the Holy Spirit, they went on to grow and develop.

The one with the five talents was expected to achieve more. He had more, so was expected to accomplish more. Because of greater ability, he was expected to go to greater pain and trouble in extending himself more. It was not sufficient for him to cruise along in smug comfort and security. The servant with only two talents was not expected to produce beyond what he could. If he did the best he could with what he had, it still produced the same percentage—double.

How does the term *creative risk* apply here? James helps explain it by saying: "For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man studying his natural face in a mirror. For he studied himself and went his way, and immediately he forgot what he was like" (James 1:23-24, Modern KJV).

To take creative risk is to open up oneself to challenges. It sees the self and determines to change what is personally needed. Few of us are comfortable at stepping into unfamiliar territory. Yet to grow, we sometimes have to be prepared to risk our fears. And God's Spirit will not let us down. It may be uncomfortable, it may mean embarrassment, feeling awkward, even foolish.

Over the history of God's Church few of us have wanted to confront speaking in public. It represented a creative risk to step up to a lectern and face an audience. But the risk of doing so paid off.

Some years ago one of the ladies who volunteered to do phoning for the waiting room program was afterward terrified at what she had let herself in for. She was concerned about how she would cope with a "No." She prayed about it. Her first call responded by saying, "Oh, that would be lovely. Thank you." Her calls thereafter weren't without some anxiety, but the ice was broken, and she moved on to a higher level of personal development.

We risk pain to do what is right. We risk pain to confront unsavory things within ourselves. But from these risks we grow, produce and increase our talents.

## The Third Wouldn't Risk Himself

"But the man with the single thousand dug a hole and carefully buried his master's money.

"After a long absence, the master of those three servants came back and settled up with them. The one given five thousand dollars showed him how he had doubled his investment. His master commended him: 'Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner.'

"The servant with the two thousand showed how he also had doubled his master's investment. His master commended him: 'Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner.'

"The servant given one thousand said, 'Master, I know you have high standards and hate careless ways, that you demand the best and make no allowances for error. I was afraid I might disappoint you, so I found a good hiding place and secured your money. Here it is, safe and sound down to the last cent'" (Matthew 25:18-25).

The third servant is severely rebuked. Why? Because he hadn't earned a lot of money for his employer? No, the parable doesn't say this. It is possible he might have been commended even if he had gained only a little, providing that he had sincerely tried. He did not mispend or embezzle or squander the money. He simply hid it. But a hidden talent is no good to anybody.

Is a spiritual talent only for one's own personal benefit and need? That he hid the money implies he was aware it was not his. Similarly, the Holy Spirit belongs to God, and He can take it away. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we are stewards of its work in our lives.

Here in this parable we have two servants who are busy developing their talents and being successful in spiritual development. The third servant remains spiritually comfortable in the smug security of having received the truth and God's Spirit, but he doesn't have the motivation for any further effort. The zeal of the others did not rub off to inspire him to any action.

The heart of the parable is that we must strive to produce fruits of the Holy Spirit. The two servants who were successful risked their spiritual capital to produce. They stepped out in faith and trusted God for the result. The third servant could have done the same, but didn't. Instead he was satisfied with what he had received; he had the truth, had access to the Holy Spirit, had a fellowship—what more was needed?

"The master was furious. 'That's a terrible way to live! It's criminal to live cautiously like that! If you knew I was after the best, why did you do less than the least? The least you could have done would have been to invest the sum with the bankers, where at least I would have gotten a little interest'" (verses 26-27).

The third servant reveals a fearful, negative attitude in living as a true Christian. He recognizes that God is his master, but he has the frame of mind that

God is demanding and unfair. He buried the money for safekeeping so that it couldn't be lost. This way he wouldn't be accountable for squandering it. He was safety minded and showed concern for his own protection. He didn't want to risk stepping out into an unknown where he might appear foolish or make mistakes.

Fear has been at the heart of our human psyche from the time of Adam and Eve. Yet often the fear of having to face the same fears again is enough to change the direction in our lives. We can say today "never again," which means we do not want to face the same experiences, attitudes, penalties or tensions. So we change.

The smallness of his one talent did not excuse him from failing to make use of it. We will not be called to account for what we couldn't do, but for what we have received. The third servant is comfortable with not having lost what he was given. He confesses, though, to burying his talent, of hiding it. Perhaps he expects praise for having kept it in a safe place and that he didn't hazard losing it.

But doesn't an attitude of mind emerge here? He fearfully viewed God's way as too harsh. Having received God's love and forgiveness, he had assumed life would be easier with-

improve. When Christ says He would have been happy with just bank interest, it indicates He would have been satisfied if the servant had just tried, even if accomplishing only a little. Instead this servant elected for safety and smug comfort. The others risked of themselves to make personal change and to grow.

## Creative Risk

"Take the thousand and give it to the one who risked the most. And get rid of this 'play-it-safe' who won't go out on a limb" (verse 28).

In effect, what Christ is saying is that what one will not do, someone else will end up doing. If we fail to be accountable for the Holy Spirit in our lives, then it will be given to someone else.

Spiritual progress comes from taking the risk of struggling to diminish the negatives in your human nature, confronting your self-justification, facing denial and examining your motives in your spiritual life.

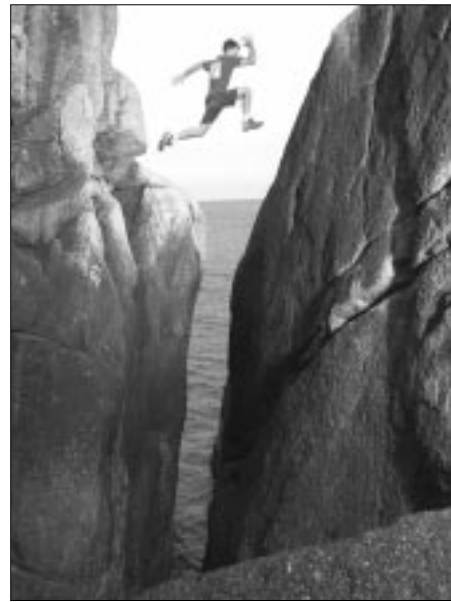
Growth in developing the fruit of the Holy Spirit means moving on to a deeper understanding and love for God's law (Psalm 119:97-104). It means walking in a deeper relationship with God through meaningful prayer and fasting.

It means exploring an ever-increasing humility and self-assessment (Psalm

131:1; Philippians 2:3). It involves an increasing dedication to be accountable and forgiven for past mistakes, attitudes and motives.

Christ does set the high level for which we are to strive. And that involves the frightening task of facing up to ourselves, of hearing what others say about us, of seeing ourselves as others see us, of recognizing our pride, our blind spots, our irritations, our areas of temptation, our fears, inadequacies, loneliness and our human inability to communicate much beyond our human limitations.

The Holy Spirit is too important to neglect. The parable of the talents helps us examine if we live in smug



*To take creative risk is to open up oneself to challenges. It sees the self and determines to change what is personally needed. Few of us are comfortable at stepping into unfamiliar territory. Yet to grow, we sometimes have to be prepared to risk our fears. And God's Spirit will not let us down.*

security, or if we exercise a creative risk in developing our spiritual talents. If we do take the risk, the unseen power of God will help us—guaranteed. UN

*Graemme Marshall pastors the Ottawa, Ontario; Montreal, Quebec; and Sussex, New Brunswick, congregations.*

# What Made Moses the meekest Man on Earth?

■ Examining between the lines of Moses' life can have benefits for our own. How did this prince turned shepherd become an example of humility?

by Tim Groves

"Who is the LORD that I should obey . . . ?" the mighty pharaoh asked Moses in Exodus 5:2. This is the same question Moses had to ask himself years earlier.

The calling and conversion of Moses is a remarkable story (especially as we take some license to fill in the blanks of the narrative). As the Bible and history show, incredible honor was given to this man with incredible humility. What shaped this man's character, and what made him the meekest man on the earth?

## Predestined and Protected

Moses' mother, Jochebed, may have remembered the good times in Egypt. Some reckonings show she may have been born while her uncle Joseph was still in a high position in Egypt (Numbers 26:59). Now, several decades later, pregnant with her third child, she and her husband, Amram, heard the news from Pharaoh—all male babies were to be killed!

The Jewish historian Josephus gives us traditional details he had learned. Josephus records that Amram prayed to God about this, and an angel appeared to him stating that the child that Jochebed was carrying would deliver the Israelites from slavery. The angel also said that he would be raised in a surprising way, and his name would last as long as the world (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book II, 9:3).

When Jochebed went into labor, there was little pain, and very few knew she had delivered (*Antiquities* II, 9:4). For three months—with total faith in God—they kept the baby a secret. When things got to the point that they could no longer keep him hid, they demonstrated their faith by putting the child totally in God's hands (Hebrews 11:23).

Jochebed's hands may have been trembling when she put her infant son in a basket in the Nile, but her faith did not waver. God noticed and rewarded her and Amram's faith by allowing them to get to take care of their son for three years and get paid for it, although slaves! God had also blessed Moses with good looks and a gifted mind. No doubt his parents told him what his destiny was! Even at such a young age, Moses knew he was special.

## Moses Must Choose

At age 3 Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses was given a royal education. He became great in Egypt. Apparently Moses became a general for the Egyptian army (*Antiquities* II, 10:1). He was a great orator and had many great deeds (Acts 7:22).

Apparently both the Egyptian people and the Hebrews liked Moses. The Egyptian leaders, how-

ever, were uncomfortable with him.

Josephus records that even the Egyptians were aware that a "deliverer" would be raised up and free the Israelites. Some warned that Moses was this person, even when Pharaoh's daughter brought Moses before Pharaoh. From a toddler through adulthood, the authorities were not sure what to do with Moses. But God obviously influenced their decisions so His will would be done. Moses became a great prince, and partook of all the benefits associated with royalty (*Antiquities* II, 9:7). Indeed, he was raised in a surprising way!

As Moses became more popular among the people, the authorities were more concerned with him, afraid he might bring a revolt against the Egyptians (*Antiquities* II, 11:1). Moses tried to please the Egyptians and the Hebrews. Perhaps he thought when he had more power, he could free his people. But Moses finally reached a crossroads and had to choose.

We are told in Acts 7:23 that God brought into remembrance his purpose, and so Moses went to visit his people. At age 40, when he saw a taskmaster beating a Hebrew, he deliberately killed the Egyptian (Exodus 2:11-12).

As recorded in Acts 7:25, Moses thought his people would believe that God was working through him to rescue them. But Moses had taken things into his own hands and acted rashly.



This act gave Pharaoh the reason he needed to get rid of Moses. Moses became afraid and ran. He left his family and his people. Moses became a fugitive.

## Humility Before Honor

Imagine the change. From the plush comforts of Egypt to the hot desert of Midian. Moses chose God over Egypt, and this is how it turned out. Or did it? God did not immediately intervene when Moses got in trouble for trying to help his fellow man. Did Moses think, "Is this what I get for trying to be faithful and fulfill my calling?" (compare Hebrews 11:24-25).

But God had not given up on Moses. He just used the circumstances to continue Moses' training.

Moses became what the Egyptians despised—a shepherd (see Genesis 46:31-34). Instead of leading mighty armies, he was reduced to leading fragile sheep. Instead of being a great orator to thousands of people, he talked to ani-

mals. When Moses left Egypt, he had no intentions of becoming a shepherd. He still believed he was the chosen one. But as time passed, his illusions of grandeur began to fade.

When Moses looked into the night sky, how much did he think about being the deliverer his parents said he would be? When he saw the caravans going to Egypt, how much did Moses think about his family, still slaves? And when Moses prayed to God, how many of his prayers centered around his destiny?

Moses eventually married and raised a family. As the months turned into years, Moses came to the conclusion that he was not going to be great. His parents must have been wrong. As time passed, Moses became content and accepted his lot in life as a humble shepherd (Exodus 2:21) (the word was is better translated *became*).

Moses learned a lot during these 40 years. He learned to be gentle and caring. He learned how to herd sheep, and now God could use him to herd people. But more importantly, Moses learned that all his knowledge and abilities had not gotten him wealth and greatness.

Rather, trusting in himself only



*Moses went from the wonders and wealth of Egypt to the desolate desert of Midian.*

brought trouble and heartache (compare Proverbs 14:12). God had used circumstances—brought about by Moses' choices—to humble him and teach valuable lessons during these 40 years. Yes, Moses learned that true greatness comes only from God (Zechariah 4:6).

## A Different Moses

The humility of Moses was apparent at the burning bush. He said that he was not great, neither in the past nor now (Exodus 4:10). But Moses was great in the things he said he wasn't (Acts 7:22). Yet Moses knew that his abilities were nothing compared to God. Moses kept declining the offer, thinking, "I'm too old to be chasing chariots!" And finally Moses said he just didn't want to do it, being content at 80 years old just tending sheep.

Consider, for a moment, what Moses' reaction might have been 40 years earlier. His answer may have been, "Yes, let's make those Egyptians pay for what they're doing! I've killed one, let's get the rest!" Moses' outlook had completely changed. He realized it wasn't all

about him. Moses was finally ready, at age 80.

Can we imagine what was going through Moses' mind during his journey back to Egypt? Surely he thought of many memories of his family and the joy of seeing his brother and learning about the welfare of his parents and sister. Chills must have run up his spine as he realized his parents were right.

But now, instead of thinking of himself as someone important, he really felt inadequate. He knew he needed God. This was not the same Moses who left Egypt 40 years earlier.

## A Man of Selfless Devotion

It is interesting to note that after accepting God's commission, whenever God told Moses to do something, the Bible records, "And Moses did as he was commanded." No more did Moses take things into his own hands, like killing the taskmaster. Moses learned to follow God's lead (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Also note that Moses did not have to kill even one Egyptian when he returned. God took care of all that.

Even with all the great miracles done through him and all the attention given him, Moses still gave credit to God. Forty years earlier this might have gone to his head (compare 1 Timothy 3:6). Even leading 2 million people, Moses knew God was their leader, not him.

This humility carried him far with God. On two separate occasions God was so aggravated with the Israelites that He offered to destroy them all and start over with Moses. Think 40 years earlier. There might have been a completely different story written. Would Moses' ego have gotten in the way then? We know that Moses changed God's mind. What would we have done?

Even when Moses' authority was challenged on several occasions, he never lashed out, "Do you know who I am!?" No, rather Moses prostrated himself and let God work it out. At times Moses even interceded for his accusers (Numbers 12:1, 13; 16:1-4, 20-22)! Yes, Moses took it seriously, caring for those whom God put under his care. Moses was never too busy to handle their problems. Moses had no selfish ambitions.

## Why Was Moses Humble?

Because of Moses' humility, God was able to use him powerfully. God used Moses to write the first five books of the Old Testament. God used Moses as a prophet and as a type of Christ. Moses was shown with Christ and Elijah in the transfiguration.

God used Moses to lead some 2 million people out of captivity to the Promised Land. And God even spoke to Moses face to face as a friend. What honor! We know that humility and a deep respect for God were a large reason for this honor given by God (Isaiah 57:15; 66:2).

Numbers 12:3 tells us that Moses was the meekest person at that time. This statement was made after Moses' conversion, not before. So where did this humility come from?

A lot of Moses' humility came by

hindsight. Moses looked back and saw all the years God worked with him, even though he wasn't aware of it at times. As an infant Moses' life was saved by a caring God. Moses' looks, intelligence and charisma were given by a gracious God (compare Deuteronomy 8:18).

The opportunities given him during his first 40 years were orchestrated by an influential God. The additional 40 years of final training in the wilderness was provided by a faithful God. And his incredible 40-year journey leading Israel to the Promised Land was guided by a longsuffering God. Yes, Moses understood that it was by God's grace that he became the person he was (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Like looking at the backside of a tapestry, Moses at first could not see the purpose for all that had happened to him, but when the tapestry was turned over, he could clearly see the greatness and mercy of God in his life. Moses learned that when God is involved, all things work together for good (Romans 8:28). Now Moses really understood, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey?"

At the end of his life, Moses' own words state why he—and all people—should obey God. In Deuteronomy 4:39-40 he said, "Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

Moses also said in Deuteronomy 31:6, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

## An Example to Follow

Like Moses, God has called us and has a plan for us. We can look back and see God's hand in our lives before we knew God. We can see God's hand in our lives today.

Like us, even after his conversion, Moses made mistakes (Numbers 20:1-12), became discouraged (Exodus 17:4), sometimes doubted his calling (Numbers 11:10-15) and even limited God (Numbers 11:21-23). But as Moses learned, and we should never forget, God will not forsake us.

Knowing all of this should humble us, as it humbled Moses. And like Moses, when the humility is there, God can do powerful things through us—both individually and collectively.

As Peter said in 1 Peter 5:6, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." Moses was a shining example of humility. Let's follow in his footsteps so that God—the "High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isaiah 57:15)—can exalt us as well. UN

Tim Groves is from the Jefferson, Georgia, congregation.

# Motivating Yourself to Study the Bible

■ **With some planning, you can make your Bible study more exciting and profitable and renew your "first love" for God's Word.**

by Allen Stout

Do you have to force yourself to study the Bible? Does your mind wander because the material is no longer as new and exciting to you as it was when God first opened your mind to understand? Have you set and failed to keep rigid schedules to make yourself get in your Bible study? How can you renew that "first love" for God's Word and work (Revelation 2:4)?

You can make your Bible study an interesting and exciting part of your day, but it takes effort and planning. Seven basic steps are outlined here to help you make your study of the Bible a scintillating and profitable adventure. Try applying these principles in your quest for knowledge and understanding of God's Word.

## Think in Spiritual Terms

A first step is to ask yourself: "What is my life all about? Where am I going?" Recognize the fleeting vanity and futility of this life's pursuits. The book of Ecclesiastes has much to say along these lines.

Perhaps you are becoming entangled again in worldly desires, which our adversary the devil uses to ensnare and take us captive (2 Timothy 2:4, 26; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 2:15-16). Satan seeks to get you in his clutches. We should not be ignorant of his devices (2 Corinthi-

ans 2:11). His greatest weapons are the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life and the vanity of the mind (Proverbs 16:18; James 1:14-16; 4:1-10). Satan uses these tactics to deceive the whole world because mankind is caught up in the quest for selfish, materialistic goals, grasping at the elusive momentary pleasures of this life (Revelation 12:9).

Instead of following after worldly pursuits, follow the admonition of Jesus Christ. He said, "Therefore take no [anxious] thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:31-33, King James Version).

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Therefore we need the Holy Spirit to understand God's Word and His purpose and plan for us (1 Corinthians 2:9-16). Do as Paul admonished Timothy, "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6). Think spiritually in word, deed and in studying the Bible (Proverbs 23:7; 1 Corinthians 10:12; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Philippians 4:8).

## Ask God for Help

A second step to profitable Bible study is to ask God daily for help (Hebrews 4:16) before every study period—to give you more of His Spirit, which He gives to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32), to enable you to believe and increase your understanding of His Word. When you pray, asking God for answers and understanding, have your Bible (His Word, which is our daily

bread—Matthew 4:4; 6:11) handy and He will guide you to His answers and give you understanding (see Job 32:8; Psalm 119:97-105, 130; Proverbs 1:1-7; 2:1-11; 3:1, 5-7, 19-21).

Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also . . . And whatever you ask in My name [by His authority to do His will], that I will do, that [for this purpose] the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:12-14).

God's Spirit enables us to understand and keep His Word. Jesus said, "When . . . the Spirit of truth, has come [it] will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

The apostle Paul explained, "No one knows [understands] the things of God [without] the Spirit of God . . . But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:11, 14). "Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5). Ask God to renew a right Spirit in you as David did (Psalm 51:10-11).

## Set Definite Goals

The first law of success is to set right goals. Solomon wrote, "Where there is no vision [dream, vision, revelation], the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18, KJV). It's hard to get excited about taking a trip if you have no destination in mind. Bible study is no different. You need definite purposes, objectives and direction to stir up your interest if you expect to get anywhere.

Goals such as the common, "I've got to get in 30 minutes of Bible study every day, come what may," or, "I'm going to read the Bible through once every year," can be helpful and may produce a measure of self-discipline, but may do little for some to motivate or spark real interest and desire.

Goals need to be challenging and satisfying, and they should stimulate personal growth. They should be practical—seeking answers to basic questions and problems of everyday life, and seeking vision into the higher goals and purposes God has for us and for mankind. Why have you been called now? How can you honor God in your family life and on the job? How is God dealing with you to perfect His character in you? How can you help others?

As Paul wrote to Timothy, "Study to [show yourself] approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness" (2 Timothy 2:15-16, KJV).

And avoid vain, philosophical questions that do not profit (Colossians 2:8). For, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Write your Bible study goals down in a notebook so you won't forget them, and add new ones as needed. Your Bible study will accomplish much if you have clear, definite objectives when you begin.

## Plan Your Bible Studies

Organize your goals and objectives into related subjects and set up priorities, with the most important subjects first. Avoid the mistake of the scribes and Pharisees, who put the little things first (Matthew 23:23).

*Organize your time.* Set aside a specific period every day to allow yourself the opportunity to accomplish the goals you have established. Be flexible, of course, when you're pinched for time, and adjust your schedule or adapt your study to fit the time—but don't just skip it. Bible studies can vary from regular personal studies to occasional family or group studies, depending on the subjects and need.

*Take notes.* What you learn from a particular study may be quickly forgotten if you don't write it down. You can review written notes occasionally and add to them in future studies. Your organized notes will also be helpful in teaching your children and others and in writing articles. You may also want to cross-reference your Bible.

God's Word was inspired and written according to a definite overall plan, but the knowledge of any particular subject is usually scattered throughout its contents. So search all the Scriptures for a complete understanding of a subject and for the proper biblical context and meaning.

## Use Reference Materials

Various Bible translations, dictionaries, word studies, concordances, commentaries, as well as books on history, science and other fields, can give helpful background information to facilitate better biblical insight, if properly used. Remember that you should use them only to supplement and magnify the Bible's meaning. They should never replace the Bible, which alone is the foundation of all truth and understanding (John 17:17).

Don't give up if understanding the Bible is still difficult. We learn little by little if we don't give up and quit. Keep your inspiration up by discussing your Bible studies with others of like mind. God will add to your understanding and joy if you are in the proper attitude and are truly seeking to know and obey God and understand how He would have you serve Him.

Some have allowed themselves to lose interest after years of reading and studying the Bible, the *Bible Study Course* and a continuous stream of booklets and articles in *The Good News* magazine and other publications. Don't let familiarity turn you off.

When you review familiar subjects, seek to make them more relevant or rewrite them in your own words. Try to gain a deeper understanding of God's Word as it applies to you, and learn how current events tie in with Bible proph-

cies and the plan of God. You never know when God may want to use you to give an answer to others, so "always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

With a little effort and a constant awareness of world conditions, you can motivate yourself and have the drive to succeed. As you realize how badly you and this world need God's help and understanding, let this stir up the Spirit that is in you (2 Timothy 2:6-7). Remember Satan is out to discourage you by every means possible (James 4:7-10; 1 Peter 5:8-9).

## Meditate on What You Study

Meditation, an important but often overlooked tool, is one of the most helpful ways to add new life and meaning to your Bible study. If you can't sleep, meditate on God's Word and He will give you sleep (Psalm 127:2), and "your sleep will be sweet" (Proverbs 3:24).

The Psalms contain these inspiring words: "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts" (Psalm 119:97-100).

Meditation—concentrated reflective thought and mental dissection of a topic—can increase your grasp and memory of the Bible and how to apply it in your daily life. Therefore, "meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

## Put the Bible Into Practice

When you have applied the above principles and developed real interest and zeal in Bible study, don't forget to act on what you learn!

We are to prove what is acceptable to God and then hold fast to it (Ephesians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:21). God gives a good understanding to all those who keep His commandments (Psalm 111:10). Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Bible study will take on a whole new meaning as you "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18) and begin to reap the fruits of righteousness. You will be a living example of what the Bible teaches.

And as Peter wrote, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord . . . by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust . . . Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble" (2 Peter 1:2, 4, 10). UN

*The author attends the Portland, Oregon, congregation.*

## Why Study the Bible?

There are many good reasons. The Bible is a foundation for understanding all knowledge and solving all problems. It's all there: the knowledge of creation, the purpose of human life, laws for success, the foundations for a right understanding of the past, present and future, and for understanding all branches of true science (see Psalm 119:98-100, 104).

Do you want wisdom (James 1:5)? The Bible is a book of wisdom and a "tree of life" to those who live by it (Proverbs 3:18).

Do you want success? The Bible reveals keys for your success. "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

Do you want a long life? "Length of days and long life and peace they will add to you" (Proverbs 3:2). Plus, "the Holy Scriptures . . . are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." For, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

We must not take our calling and opportunity to be in the first resurrection as firstfruits and the Bride of Christ lightly. Salvation and eternal life are a gift from God (Romans 6:23), but notice the warning in Jesus' parables, lest we become complacent: He said, "Many are called, but few chosen" (Matthew 20:1-16; 22:1-14; see also Matthew 13:1-23; 25:11-13; Revelation 14:4-5; 17:14; 19:6-9).

Paul also exhorted, "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away . . . how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation . . . ?" (Hebrews 2:1, 3). Don't let complacency cause you to lose your crown (Revelation 3:11), for the promise is only to those who overcome and endure to the end (see Matthew 10:22; 2 Peter 3:11-14; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 20:6, 21:7).

Allen Stout

# Walking in Lockstep

by Robert Berendt

No two people can ever fully agree on all things. That is just a fact of life—and a wonderful fact.

It's like a three-legged race in which two people have one leg tied to the leg of the other to become a team. Running quickly in that position is difficult. Even when you are good at it, the ankles rub against one another and the legs hurt. We all walk differently. Our legs may be different in length. We also have different beliefs, brush our teeth differently and have habits that are unique. Just like our fingerprints or DNA—no two are identical.

Since we cannot agree on all things, must we conclude that we can never walk together? Of course, we know that is not correct. So how are we to understand the scripture that asks: "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

## Adjusting Our Steps

All of our lives we need other people. The other day I was walking down a sidewalk and in front of me was a mother and her little girl walking together. It was obvious that Mom took smaller, shorter steps than she usually

would so the little girl could keep up.

There was a lesson in what I saw and scenes like it. We know that in order for humans to agree, one or the other—or both—have to give a little. We know we need to adjust our demands and our normal habits to make it possible for us to agree or fit in with another person.

## Bridging the Gap

Jesus Christ tolerated spiritual immaturity in His disciples and followers. They had different opinions on various things. Matthew 26:6-9 tells of the disciples wanting to use the money in a different way than Christ did. In Matthew 19:13-14 the disciples wanted children kept away from Christ.

John 6:66 gives us the understanding that some decided not to walk with Jesus and left Him over a disagreement. We see that sometimes it truly is impossible to walk with one another when we are not in agreement. It ought to be clear that those disagreements would have to be major, because there always are disagreements.

Great lessons were learned and the disciples did change. There were times when patience was exhausted due to the seeming inability of a person to change. Paul confronted Peter in Galatians 2:11, but they did continue to walk together. Peter writes later about "our beloved brother Paul" in 2 Peter 3:15.

## Agree to Walk Together

What becomes clear in all these examples is that people do not have to fully agree in everything in order to walk together. But they must agree to walk together—that is the point! Once you agree to walk together, you then adjust to one another and accept differences. This is true in marriage, family life, the workplace and in every interaction between people.

We must agree to walk together. That is easier said than done, and obviously there may be a point when that becomes impossible. That agreement contains the determination to accept differences that cannot be changed and to work toward the common goal of being like Christ and like God (Matthew 5:48).

All of us fall far short of the perfect way. Yet Jesus Christ and God the Father do walk with us (Hebrews 13:5-6). They walk in patience and confidence that we will indeed grow to be more like Them. Sometimes God takes shorter steps and pauses to wait for us—just like a loving Father. God

knows that even converted people will have to keep on fighting inner flaws.

It is clear that God makes all the difference. Since we are and always will be different from one another (male/female, young/old, sick/healthy, rich/poor, etc.), the obvious conclusion is that we are simply to agree to walk together. One makes up for that which may be lacking or different about the other.

## Family Ties

Husbands and wives ought to have the closest relationship we can have as humans. We differ (*vive la différence*) in many ways. We agree to walk together. We promise God that we will be kind, loving and respectful in our marriage vows. We say we will cherish and honor one another.

We promise one another that we will walk faster or slower for each other—in sickness and in health, in affluence and in poverty. We determine to walk together, and we agree to walk together in spite of our differences. Once we understand that and accept the other person, marriage becomes a delight that lasts a lifetime.

It is true that differences can separate people. It is true that you cannot walk

together if differences are large enough to prevent bridges from being built. That is why we ought to marry people who have many similarities to ourselves. Similar religious views is one area on which the Bible is adamant (1 Corinthians 7:39).

Verses 10-16 speak about the result of differences that make walking together as husband and wife impossible. But with continual positive steps being taken, almost any relationship can be maintained on a good and solid footing. Marriages are improved once the partners focus on what they really like about one another—not the negatives.

In Psalm 133 God promises the blessing of life forevermore to those who dwell together in unity.

Our directions and efforts in life ought to lean toward narrowing our differences, appreciating the strengths of others and adjusting our own steps when needed—so we can walk together.

Let us take a lesson from our children as we walk with them. We do not mind adjusting to their gait. We will talk in their language. We may begin to enjoy the slower pace—and, yes, we can even smell a rose or two. UN

# Turning Points

by Jeannette Freeman

On March 31 I celebrated the 15th anniversary of my baptism. The turning point I would like to focus on here occurred four years later.

My father called me one morning that spring and asked me if I realized what was happening in the Church. I did, but I hadn't admitted it to my conscious self. I knew the Church, as I knew it, was falling apart.

I had grown up in the Church. I had attended Sabbath school, taught by my mother, before there were YES lessons. When YES came along, I memorized the required scriptures and I attended classes. When I entered YOU, I participated in music talent contests and cheerleading. I attended SEP in Orr, Minnesota, and also worked on the canoe program there as a high school worker.

As my senior year of high school approached, I decided that I would apply to Ambassador College in Big Sandy. I did just that and spent four wonderful years there. And now here

I was, almost two years out of college with my world falling apart.

At the time I was working nights at the *Minnesota Daily*, the student newspaper of the University of Minnesota. I alternated evenings as a news editor and as a copy editor. As a news editor I was responsible for the final edit of the newspaper—that it looked good and was right before it went to press.

Now, as I mentioned, I knew the Church was falling apart, but I hadn't admitted it to myself. At my job as news editor I had a fair amount of down time as I waited to check others' work before it went to press. During that time the subconscious part of my brain worried over this church problem.

One day I arrived at work to a less-than-happy editor-in-chief and one of the few disciplinary actions I have ever received on the job. You see, I had allowed a misspelled word in a headline on the front page to go to press and she was not happy about it. The only thing that probably saved my job

that day was the fact that the assistant editor had caught the mistake before the paper had actually gone to press. To say that I was a bit distracted at work during this time would be accurate.

As I was in my boss' office that day, she asked me if everything was all right in my personal life. My eyes welled up as I told her I was having some family trouble and as I thought, "She wouldn't understand." You see, it really was family trouble—not only my physical family, but my spiritual family as well. I had a lot invested in my church—I had all my friends from college, all the friends I had grown up with, and I had my family—Mom, Dad, sister, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents.

After I got off the phone that day with my dad I knew the jig was up. I couldn't keep this problem in the back part of my brain anymore. It was going to have to come to the front and be dealt with.

This was a week or two before the spring Holy Days and a time of great debate in my life and many close to me. I kept my fourth Passover with a less than ideal attitude. I tried to keep the service sacred, but the pain,

anguish and, mostly, uncertainty of the future pushed its way over the event's sacredness and I'm afraid my focus that evening wasn't really much on the meaning of the foot washing, the wine and the bread, just as my focus at work wasn't on the headlines.

The First Day of Unleavened Bread wasn't much better. That weekly Sabbath was the end. I couldn't do this anymore. I realized that it was time for me to leave the church I had grown up in. I realized that, no matter what had happened in the past, that God didn't want me to stay any longer. After that morning service I walked out, on my way to attend an afternoon service with a group that would eventually become part of the United Church of God.

The building Worldwide met in was a junior high school and there was a long hallway lined with lockers as one exited the building. I walked along alone, slowly, teary-eyed, as I left that day. And I prayed. I thanked God for all the things in my life that I had because of the Worldwide Church of God.

I had friends and experiences I wouldn't have had otherwise. I had

camp. I had college. I had a fabulous foundation for the rest of my life. I thanked Him for all these things and I thanked Him for showing me that it was time to move on. And I did.

About six months ago I had another turning point in my life. By then my husband Mark and I had been living in Cincinnati for over a year, Mark had completed seven months of ABC and we had gotten to know several of the home office staff on a personal level. And for the first time in over 10 years I realized that once again I was wholly and undoubtedly loyal to my church. It was and is a good feeling.

I don't know what the next 20 years or so will bring. I hope that Jesus Christ will return by then. But if He doesn't, I hope my daughter, as she pledges her life to God through baptism, can look back on her life growing up in the Church—attending Sabbath school, going to camp, spending time with friends who have the same faith as she and traveling to the Feast of Tabernacles.

And I hope that as she does she will appreciate the turning points that brought her there. UN

*Jeannette Freeman is a member in the Columbia, Missouri, congregation.*

"British Isles," continued from page 3

**Feast Site Selection:** David Fenney reported on behalf of the National Council's Feast Site Selection Committee concerning Feast sites for 2007 and 2008. The Council asked the committee to search out and review potentially less expensive sites, such as caravan parks, where it may be possible for

all Feastgoers to be housed at one site.

**Arbitration, Reconciliation and Mediation:** Bryan Ellams reported on behalf of the Council's ARM Committee that the committee is a forum in which complicated issues can be addressed. He read the publication *Twelve Rules of Reconciliation*, which has been issued to the members of the ARM Committee.

**Media and Internet:** There is now the possibility of the Church being able to accept donations over the Internet by credit or debit card. The committee drew the Council's attention to the possibility of the Church's Web site hosting forums and chat rooms (of potential interest to teenagers and young adults); the Council considered that personal security and child protection issues would need to be

considered before proceeding with such suggestions.

Other business:

- Bryan Ellams updated the Council with the current planning for a Young Adults' Leadership Weekend, which will likely take place in the summer.

- The annual review of the performance of the Council and its officers will be considered at the next meeting.

- Peter Hawkins drew the Council's attention to the Church's need for detailed plans for dealing with disaster recovery. This would include being able to contact and aid members in the event of an emergency.

The National Council's next meeting will be May 21 and the Annual General Meeting is set for July 16 near Reading. UN

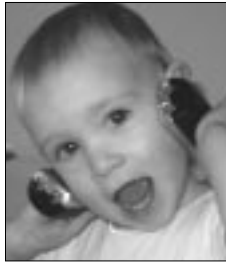
# Treasure Digest

## Become as Little Children

"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3-4).

We've all heard the command from Jesus Christ to become as little children, and there are many angles from which to consider this instruction.

Recently I was struck by an insight into this, thanks to my 1½-year-old daughter, Cadence. Lately she is very interested in the telephone and likes to pretend



to talk on it (though her vocabulary is quite small). I was listening in to her conversation, which went something like this, "Hello? Hi! Um hum, yes, yes. Bye." The words and intonation were nearly an exact replica of what you might hear me saying to one of my friends on the phone.

How remarkable that a child, without really understanding the purpose, will mimic nearly everything his or her parents do. I thought this was an interesting thing to witness and apply to our spiritual lives.

God likewise wants us to mimic Him and develop His character. We may not always fully understand the great purpose that each bit of it has, but it is necessary that our actions imitate those of our Father to develop holy and righteous character.

In the same line of thinking, it also occurred to me, what if babies didn't mimic their parents? What if they decided that they didn't need to

develop these characteristics and that their way was perfectly fine and perhaps even better?

How useless that would be—they would never come close to reaching their full potential as human beings.

Likewise, if we do not act as our Father and Lord Jesus Christ do and do not develop their characteristics, we will also never come close to reaching our true, spiritual potential. Just some food for thought!

Cindy Phelps

Cincinnati, Ohio, East congregation

## A Potato Lesson About Forgiveness

Take a potato and write on it the name of a person who has offended you, causing you to feel angry, upset, slandered, embarrassed, belittled, etc. Do this for every person who has done something against you that you have never forgiven.

When you have finished, gather all your potatoes together and place them in a bag. Keep this bag with you at all times. Take it to work, take it to lunch and take it with you everywhere you go. Have it with you at home.

How long will it take you to become weary of carrying this burden around?

How long will it take the potatoes to sprout, then rot, fester and smell?

Wouldn't it be great to be free from the weight, stench and constant reminder of hurt feelings, disappointment, heartache and anger? By hanging onto things that are unpleasant, we create more anguish for ourselves. When you forgive someone, you free yourself from an oppressive load of negativity. Forgiveness allows you to create peace in your life.

Every one of us has been offended or upset with someone at one time or another. How long have we carried around the oppressive heavy burden, developed hardness of the heart and just didn't let it go? It usually doesn't bother the person who caused you to be offended as much as it hurts you to continually be obsessing over the offense. Not being forgiving can cause you physical, emotional and spiritual stress. This is a good lesson you can teach your children too.

## Turning the Hearts . . . Children's Children Are a Crown—to Grandparents!

Did you ever meet a grandma who didn't have photos of her grandkids handy? I remember my wife walking through airports with a canvas bag that had slots for photos on the outside. Many commented on the pictures of our grandchildren.

Grandparents have a glow on their faces when they think about or speak of their grandchildren. Often when I talk with others who are grandparents, I sense their love for and the desire to be with their grandchildren as often as possible.

Grandparents are a blessing to any family in so many ways. We will explore some of these occasionally in this column. This time I want to focus on helping lead our grandchildren to be righteous.

"Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments" (Deuteronomy 7:9; see also 6:7). Three of those generations involve you as a grandparent and your grandchildren. How may we help keep our grandchildren following God?

**1. Our Example.** We can, with God's help, be Christlike in all we do. How we treat our grandchildren and others will say much about whether our grandkids will follow in God's way.

**2. Our Teaching.** Grandparents have so many experiences with life and particularly with the Christian life. We may impart to our grandchildren the wisdom and godliness that we have learned. It is important to teach our grandchildren the godly principles through stories or lessons. Read to them in a way that children may understand the wonderful examples of biblical heroes. We can help our grandchildren come to love those who walked with God so they may have godly models to follow.

**3. Our Blessings.** We can show them the principle of giving by bringing presents and doing things for them. Giving them books and toys or their favorite meals will show them that there are benefits to following godly ways. They will learn that giving brings happiness both to the giver and receiver.

Remember Proverbs 17:6, "Children's children are the crown of old men [and women]."

Gary E. Antion



The "Lord's Prayer" in Matthew 6 is quoted often as the example of how we are to pray. Verse 12 reads, "And forgive us our debts [sins], as we forgive our debtors." Verses 14 and 15 read, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you forgive men not their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Another set of scriptures we often quote is called the "Beatitudes" in Matthew 5:3-11. Verse 7 reads, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Ask God in prayer to show you how to forgive and show mercy to others. It's not always the easiest thing to do, but it's the godly principle we have to do in order to become more like our Father and Jesus Christ.

Shelby Faith

St. Louis, Missouri, congregation

## God Answers Small Prayers

Several years ago, shopping for the entire month's groceries with my children along could be quite an ordeal for everyone.

On one of these grocery trips, one of my daughters brought along her favorite doll. My son, being mischievous, had been teasing her during the entire time at the grocery store. It wasn't malicious, just out-of-boredom teasing. After dealing with this frustration in the store, we finally headed home.

Traffic was especially heavy that day for some reason. It was summertime, so we had our windows open. We had to rely on 4/60 air-conditioning: All four windows down and driving at a brisk pace. Still teasing his little sister, my son playfully

held the dolly out of the window. I hit a bump on the road, and, wouldn't you know it, the dolly fell to the middle of the street.

When she started crying, I looked in the rearview mirror. Sure enough, I saw the dolly in the middle of the road, and the car behind me was closing in. She cried for her dolly.

My son was beside himself, "Mom, I didn't mean to. Really, I didn't."

She cried, "I want my dolly!" In my frustration, I said, "I can't go back now. Traffic is too heavy."

"Then what are we going to do?" my son asked as he tried to console his sister.

In my frustration I said the first thing that came to mind: "Pray about it." I was not expecting anything to happen really, but the car quieted down. In retrospect, probably all six of us, my five children and myself, were praying for that. I only know my prayer, which was that she be contented and that God give me the wisdom to handle the situation.

Since it was a half hour drive to the store without heavy traffic, I soon concentrated on getting us and the groceries home before they spoiled in the heat. When we arrived at home, my older children grabbed bags to take inside, and my little girl ran inside. In less than 15 seconds she came running back with the doll in her hands—the same one that had fallen on the street!

In disbelief, I asked, "Is this the same doll?" All of my children nodded.

My son said, "Mom, I saw it fall on the street!"

We were all amazed that day, but every time something comes up, I remind my children, "Remember the doll? God answers small prayers."

Sonia Barthel

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, congregation

## Quiz: Who's My Father?

The word *father* is used 943 times in the New King James Version. Sometimes details are given about a father, and sometimes he is just a name in a genealogy. Try your hand at identifying the following fathers.

1. My father was a Levite who had two wives. My mother, his favorite, was distressed because for years she was barren. Peninnah, his other wife, had children and made life miserable for my mother. In desperation, my mother vowed to God that if He gave her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord all the days of his life, and that he would be a Nazirite. God answered and I was born. (Bonus: What is my name?)
2. My father was a ruler of the synagogue, and he came to Jesus pleading for His help. I, his only daughter and a mere 12 years old, lay dying. Then someone arrived saying, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." Jesus comforted my father, saying that if he believed, I would be made well. When He came to our house, people were already mourning, and ridiculed Him when He told them not to weep. He put them all out. When He said, "Little girl arise," I did, and my parents were astonished. (a) Jephthah
3. Our father lived in Caesarea, and was one of the original seven deacons chosen by the Church to care for the widows. He also was an evangelist, preaching in the city of Samaria, and he was the one who taught and baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. My sisters and I didn't marry, and we were all prophetesses. (Bonus: How many sisters did I have?) (b) Philip
4. My father was a Gileadite, a mighty man of valor, and because he was the son of a harlot, his brothers drove him away from home. He went to the land of Tob and gathered a band of raiders to follow him. When Israel was threatened by the Ammonites, the elders of Gilead approached him for help, and he came back as their leader. My father vowed that if God would deliver the Ammonites into his hand, when he returned he would offer the first thing that came out of his house to meet him as a burnt offering. To his distress, I, his daughter and only child, came out to meet him. Scholars are not sure of my actual fate—whether I was sacrificed or lived as a virgin consecrated to God. (c) Elkanah
5. My father, a Danite, and my mother could not have children. One day an angel appeared to my mother, announcing that she would at last have a son, and that she was not to drink any alcoholic beverage or eat any unclean thing during her pregnancy. I was to be a Nazirite. When my mother told my father of this visit, my father, wanting to hear for himself, prayed to God to send the man of God again, which He did. This time, my father, realizing that he was talking to an angel, feared for their lives. But as promised, I was born a short time later. My father has a name, but my mother is anonymous. (Bonus: What is my name?) (d) Manoah (e) Jairus

Karen Meeker

St. Louis, Missouri, congregation

Answers: 1. c (1 Samuel 1); 2. e (Luke 8:41-56); 3. b (Acts 6:5; 8:26-30; 21:8-9); 4. a (Judges 11:1-40); 5 d (Judges 13:1-25).

## Resist the Enemy

Our enemy is relentless. Peter warned us in 1 Peter 5:7-8 that we must be ever vigilant and resist the attacks of the enemy. Just because we've been hurt badly and are a much smaller church than we once were does not mean the devil has packed up and retired. He will never stop attacking us until he is locked up for good. His tactics are well known: distract, discourage, divide and overwhelm with despair. And yet, knowing this, we still fall for the same temptations.

One of the devil's tried and true tactics is to get brethren to do his dirty work for him, by enticing us to sow discord and division in the Church. God hates the sowing of division. God's Spirit in us will be peaceable and patient (1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22-23). Deeply converted people do not argue and wrangle over doctrine (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Pride revels in being right and winning the argument. Human nature is impatient, but godly love patiently waits for God to set the record straight in His time and in His way. Paul advised us that when we believe a thing that would cause someone else to stumble, that we must keep it between us and God alone (Romans 14:22).

We need to focus on the big picture—God's Kingdom—and not be distracted from our true calling to focus on minutiae. Don't fall into the trap of obsessing about some issues and falling short in the weightier matters (as the Pharisees did). Don't be distracted by the world and its problems (1 John 2:15; 2 Timothy 2:4). Let worldly people deal with worldly problems (Matthew 8:22).

Don't be pulled into causes, controversies or crusades to the detriment of your true calling. Paul urged us to focus on our true calling, casting all else aside, and to not neglect the fabu-

lous opportunity that God has offered us (Hebrews 12:1-2, 2:1-3).

Jay Turner

San Jose, California, congregation

## Is It OK for a Christian to Be "Cool"?

Is it OK for a Christian to be cool? This question is made difficult by the fact that the term *cool* has come to be used as a synonym for many positive concepts such as good, confident, beautiful, perfect, ingenious, stylish or fine.

But the original, hard-core concept of coolness is not such a positive thing. We think of coolness as an expression of the modern personality. We learned it in school if we are about age 50 or younger. Our society is saturated with this concept by the entertainment industry.

What is this coolness really? Hardcore coolness is an expression of feeling self-confident and superior to others. It's hallmark is a mildly expressed disdain for others who do not share one's "superior" traits. This disdain is expressed by withholding attention, friendliness or warmth, hence to be "cool."

This attitude is based on a feeling that a person is superior because he or she has more money, is sexier or in some way physically superior in appearance, has the "right" clothes, listens to the "right" music or rubs shoulders with the "right" people.

Spiritually, this type of coolness is

an expression of human pride or, as 1 John 2:16 calls it, "the pride of life." The Bible has much to say about pride. Jesus Christ calls it an evil that defiles a man (Mark 7:22-23). Proverbs says God hates a proud look (Proverbs 6:17) and that God will "destroy the house of the proud" (15:25)

It is interesting that God can be cool—cool toward the proud. "Though the LORD is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar" (Psalm 138:6). He sees their attitude as an abomination (Proverbs 16:5). God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

Obviously coolness that comes from pride is not something for Christians to adopt in attitude or in manner. We must recognize that the physical advantages that we may have in this life are only a gift from God. As the Scripture says: "It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves" (Psalm 100:3). Disdain for the weak, the poor, the unattractive or the disenfranchised is simply wrong.

Warmth (the expression of God's love, grace and concern) instead of coolness, is what God desires in His children. Opening our hearts to others means having humility instead of pride.

Susan Herrmann  
Canton, Ohio, congregation

## For I Was in Prison and You Visited Me

God is calling some in prison. If your pastor mentions that there are prospective members in prison in your area, what can you do to help? Talk with your pastor and consider these ideas.

An inmate needs to be connected to

the real world. He needs to know that someone believes in him and understands what he is going through so that he will hang on to his humanity and be a better person once he is released.

Mail time and visitation are the only bright spots in an otherwise drab and brutal life. While most people can't actually visit inmates due to prison regulations and visitation lists, others can write. Consistency is important in fostering connections and hope. The average inmate gets very few visits and a letter only about six times a year. In addition, after having been incarcerated for a year or more, an inmate is likely to find that for the most part he has been forgotten by many of his friends and family members. This is very painful and discouraging to an inmate.

Visiting with an inmate, whether by mail or in person, does not mean condoning his wrongs. It is very inspiring to an inmate when someone he is close to holds him accountable for his behavior by expecting the best of him. Giving him examples of former

inmates who are now doing well is also helpful.

Letting him know that you are looking out for his family members is a wonderful way to foster his connections to the real world and helps the family members as well. From my own experience I know that it is rewarding to help someone in prison become a person that society can be proud of.

Marilyn Braley  
Houston South, Texas, congregation

## Share Your Treasures!

Do you have any short items of biblical wisdom, humor or practical information that you would like to share? Please send them to your local pastor and ask him to forward them to *United News* at the home office. Guidelines available on request (mike\_bennett@ucg.org).

# Children's Corner

Hi, kids! Here's a new section for you. If you or your parents have any ideas or suggestions for this section, let us know. Write to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 or e-mail mike\_bennett@ucg.org.

The Holy Day of Pentecost is coming up June 4. On this special day this year the Church of God will be *1,975 years old!* The Church started on the Day of Pentecost talked about in Acts chapter 2.

Here is a word search and a connect the dots about Pentecost. You can find more about Pentecost in the booklet *God's Holy Day Plan*. Have fun!

### Pentecost Word Search

A M H O L Y D A Y X<sup>15</sup> L D E Q P U  
 J T B C Q T N U O C M O S<sup>16</sup> E S P  
 F J I C H A<sup>11</sup> M W Z<sup>13</sup> H U<sup>16</sup> C G L N E  
 I M X P I E T E<sup>12</sup> O I J G R E D N  
 F I R E B I<sup>10</sup> D E O S Z F<sup>17</sup> A<sup>19</sup> S T  
 T<sup>5</sup> B U T O N S K M A P O S T L E  
 Y W<sup>8</sup> S E H A R S B E U O D K<sup>20</sup> I C  
 M O G R C<sup>9</sup> H U R C H N T W Y U O  
 T<sup>4</sup> I F<sup>7</sup> R S T F R U I T S E Q S  
 P T R J U D H O L Y S P I R I T  
 I<sup>3</sup> O E T<sup>8</sup> S E V R A H F E Z T M<sup>2</sup> O  
 B N W A L V T E S T I L K Q W R  
 D G<sup>2</sup> O E T N L P S E E D L I N G  
 Z U S E R P A E P R I E X P R I  
 B E<sup>1</sup> C O M M A N D M E N T S I N<sup>22</sup>  
 U S P I R I V T A L D N I K T O

**WORD LIST:** APOSTLE, CHURCH, COMMANDMENTS, FEAST, FIFTY, FIRE, FIRSTFRUITS, HOLY DAY, HOLY SPIRIT, MOSES, PENTECOST, PETER, REPENT, TONGUES, WEEKS  
**BONUS WORDS** (backwards or diagonal): COUNT, HARVEST, LAW, POWER

**CONNECT-THE-DOTS:** After doing the word search, you may want to connect the numbered dots in a different color to reveal a picture. Afterward you can color the picture orange. Clue: Acts 2:3.

## Question and Answer: Doesn't Colossians 2:14-15 Say the Law Was Nailed to the Cross?

Many have asked about Colossians 2:14-15 and the "handwriting of ordinances that was against us" (King James Version), which Paul said Christ nailed to the cross.

The Greek expression translated "handwriting of ordinances" is *cheirographon tois dogmasin*. *Cheirographon* refers to "a hand-written document, specif. a certificate of indebtedness" and can be translated as "account, record of debts" (*BDAG Lexicon*). So Colossians 2:14 means that the sacrificial death of Christ "cancelled the record of our debts"—the death penalty of our sins (*Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains*).

The Revised Standard Version helps make the meaning clear: "having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross." Likening the "handwriting of ordinances" to something comparable in our modern justice system, it would be the formal written order of a death sentence, after the presentation and weighing of all evidence against us.

That is, Colossians 2:14 speaks of our death warrant, issued for spiritual crimes (sin, or breaking the law of God). God commutes the death sentence when a person repents of sin and seeks His forgiveness. Paul's wording is a dramatic characterization of the benefit of Christ's sacrifice. Christ's sacrifice effectively nails the "death warrant" bearing our name and the sins we committed to His cross, taking the death penalty on Himself. Forgiveness is more than a pardon, for the penalty for our spiritual crimes wasn't merely set aside. It was paid in full by Christ's death.

Imagine a court official hammering the certified copy of an execution order with your name on it onto the stake upon which the Romans crucified Jesus—which was splattered with His life's blood—to show that you do not have to die for your spiritual crime. That's the striking illustration Paul presented in Colossians 2:14.

Those who would have us believe that it refers to the cancellation of God's law violently misrepresent Paul's powerful teaching analogy. Again, likening it to our modern justice system, their characterization would be like saying that commuting the death sentence of a criminal ended all laws against crime. The lack of common sense is obvious.

Our booklets *The Ten Commandments* and *Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest* explain in clear language how the law is applicable and necessary in the everyday life of the Christian. You can find them online at the literature library of our Web site at [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org).

# Preteen Camps—More Than Just Great Fun!

All parents in God's Church have the same goal—to lead our children toward understanding and embracing the truth of God. Some of the best ways to do this are by introducing them to young people their own age of like mind, getting them involved together in fun activities and focusing their teachings on God's way of life.

Camp is a terrific place to achieve these goals! Camp is not just for teens! If you have children ages 6 to 12 years of age, you can find this experience in one of the many UCG preteen camps listed below.

"We have many preteen camps organized by dedicated volunteers whose main goal is to help our children connect with God, His truth and His Church," said Dave Myers, national preteen camp liaison for the Church.

"There are many children in small, isolated church areas who want to meet others like them. It was extremely rewarding to go to the Feast this year and watch all these children from camp hugging and reuniting with one another," said Shari Fooshe, director of Camp Tomahawk in Camden, Tennessee.

Camp may be one of the most important things we can do for our youth. A recent survey found that the average age children decide to stay in God's Church is approximately 9 years of age. With that in mind, we need to do all we can to establish a strong base for our children before they ever reach their teen years.

Each of our preteen camps offers a wide variety of activities and events, but some of the things you might find include Christian Living classes, swimming, kickball, softball, leatherworks, arts and crafts, hayrides, music, dance, novelty Olympics, treasure hunts, movie night, fishing, hiking and much more.

Both overnight camps and day camps are being offered in 2006.

If you would like more information about these camps or would like to serve in one of the many needed areas at a preteen camp, please visit our Web site at [www.ucg.org/youthcamps/preteen/](http://www.ucg.org/youthcamps/preteen/) or contact the individuals listed below:

## Houston Regional Preteen Camp

The Arrow Retreat Center, 18993 Ferne Drive, Porter, Texas  
May 28 to 31, 2006  
Age Range: 7 to 12  
Fees: Camper, \$200 per child; staff, no charge

**Contact Information:**  
Elisa Hees/Christine Whitley  
P.O. Box 813, Montgomery, TX 77356

(936) 672-6746  
E-mail: [a-espacialities@charter.net](mailto:a-espacialities@charter.net); [cwhitley@ev1.net](mailto:cwhitley@ev1.net)  
Application Deadline: May 15

**Description:** The Houston congregations are pleased to sponsor a preteen camp featuring activities such as swimming, arts and crafts, sports, Christian education, fishing, etc. New this year, the campers will have the opportunity to showcase their talents and share

them with their fellow campers. We will have a "Talent Show" one evening during the camp. It is a multiple-day, resident camp with excellent facilities and is fully staffed to care for the needs of our young campers.

## Lewistown Preteen Camp

Grubb's Church Picnic Grove, Mt. Pleasant Mills, Pennsylvania  
June 25 to 28, 2006  
Age Range: 5 to 12  
Fees: Camper/staff/parent: \$20 each  
**Contact Information:**  
Renita Brummett  
115 Lake Road, Beavertown, PA 17813

(570) 837-0134  
E-mail: [renita@ethanjacobscott.com](mailto:renita@ethanjacobscott.com)  
Application Deadline: May 15  
Local Web Site Address: [www.ucgnet.org/lewisstown](http://www.ucgnet.org/lewisstown)

**Description:** The Lewistown Preteen Camp gives our children the opportunity to get closer to nature and God. The facility we hold our camp at has a full kitchen and a large pavilion for serving meals. Our campers "rough it," sleeping in tents and spending most of their time outdoors.

Many families have come to the camp together to enjoy the relaxing atmosphere that comes with the outdoors and fellowship with others of the same belief. Parents are more than welcome to come, even if they have children that are not of camper age, with the understanding that they would be responsible for them.

Each year we have a camp theme. Last year we covered the life of Ruth. This year's lessons in the morning will be about the story of Hannah, Samuel and possibly Saul. The last evening of camp the children perform a play complete with costumes and songs written just for the play.

Throughout the day the children have crafts, sports, nature class and swimming.

## Camp Tomahawk

Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park, Eva, Tennessee  
July 23 to 27, 2006  
Age Range: 6 to 12  
Fees: Campers: \$110 (\$10 discount applied to fee if paid by May 15); staff, \$60 (\$10 discount applied to fee if paid by May 15)

**Contact Information:**  
Shari Fooshe  
1286 Walnut Grove Road, Dickson, TN 37055  
(615) 740-7915

E-mail: [THREEMMOM@juno.com](mailto:THREEMMOM@juno.com)  
Application Deadline: May 15  
Local Web Site Address: [www.ucg-nashville.org](http://www.ucg-nashville.org)

**Description:** Located on beautiful Kentucky Lake, Camp Tomahawk offers many exciting activities including Christian Living, swimming with lazy river ride, leatherworks, athletics/sports, arts and crafts, reptile and owl program, hike, puppet show, non-contact dance class and much more. We also take pride in our themed dinners (dress in your favorite themed outfit for our costume contest) and sample some

of the best themed camp food ever offered!

The camp is a multiple-day, resident camp. Campers will stay in the air-conditioned group lodge with several selected counselors, while the remaining staff are housed in the beautiful park cabins exactly 1 mile from the group lodge. Each lodge and cabin has attached bathroom facilities.

Camp Tomahawk is divided into two age categories for activity purposes, ages 6 to 8 and ages 9 to 12.

Because space at



Camp Tomahawk

Camp Tomahawk is very limited for both staff and campers, we may not be able to accept all applicants. Please apply early, as special consideration will be given to those who possess specific skills that are needed at camp. Please visit our Web site at [www.ucg-nashville.org](http://www.ucg-nashville.org) for additional information.

## Camp Ironwood Springs (North Central Regional Preteen Camp)

Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch, Rt. 1, Stewartville, Minnesota  
July 25 to 28, 2006  
Age Range: 6 to 12  
Fees: Special family pricing: first camper, \$120; second, \$100; third, \$80; family maximum, \$325. Teen staff: \$80. Adult staff: no charge. Scholarships available for those financially in need.

**Contact Information:**  
Steve and Kathe Myers  
25897 655th St., Kasson, MN 55944  
(507) 634-6363  
E-mail: [steve\\_myers@ucg.org](mailto:steve_myers@ucg.org)  
Application Deadline: June 26  
Local Web Site Address: [www.ucg-calm.org](http://www.ucg-calm.org)

**Description:** Camp Ironwood Springs takes place in a spectacular outdoor setting in southeastern Minnesota. The camp is about 90 miles south of the Twin Cities, and just 15 miles west of Rochester, Minnesota, off I-90.

Ironwood Springs offers a variety of children's activities including Christian Living, horseback riding, crafts, field games, court games, swimming, hiking/exploring, obstacle courses, music, wagon rides, camp fires, sing-alongs and novelty Olympics. The girls' and boys' dorms are located in the main lodge and are air-conditioned. Each dorm will be grouped by age and will have an adult counselor and cocounselor staying with the campers. The

showers are also located in the main lodge so campers will not have to walk to an outside bathroom.

## Camp UCanDo (Day Camp)

United Church of God, 850 N. Bluff Road, Greenwood, Indiana  
July 11 to 13, 2006  
Age Range: 5 to 12  
Fees: Camper, \$25 (\$20 for each



additional child from the same family; \$50 maximum per family). Staff, no charge

**Contact Information:**  
Diana White  
324 Wales Court, Greenwood, IN 46142

(317) 884-3416  
E-mail: [bdkjwhite@hotmail.com](mailto:bdkjwhite@hotmail.com)  
Application Deadline: May 22  
Local Web Site Address: [www.ucgindy.org](http://www.ucgindy.org)

**Description:** Our activities include arts and crafts, Christian Living, photography, nature, home economics, science, outdoor games, water day, team building and sign language. Download your camper and/or staff application from our local Web site.

Because this is a day camp, camper families must arrange their own housing in the area. Check out our Web site for information on nearby camping facilities and hotel information or contact the director for suggestions.

## Great Lakes Region Preteen Camp

Camp Buckeye, 10055 Camp Road NW, Beach City, Ohio  
July 30 to Aug. 2, 2006  
Age Range: 6 to 12  
Fees: Camper, \$65; \$50 for each additional child from the same family. Adult staff, \$20. Teen staff, \$30.

**Contact Information:**  
Gary and Peggy Summers (assistant directors)  
6215 Bayside St. NW, Canton, OH 44718

(330) 499-4736  
E-mail: [p\\_summers@ameritech.net](mailto:p_summers@ameritech.net)  
Application Deadline: June 15  
Local Web Site Address: [www.ucgakron.org](http://www.ucgakron.org)

**Description:** Dave and Pam Myers will be the directors. Activities will include swimming, fishing, leatherworks, arts and crafts, field games, a walk in a waterfall, campfires and games! Be sure to download your application packet today at [www.ucgakron.org](http://www.ucgakron.org). It contains all the information you need about camp.

We would also like to remind the teens and adults that we cannot run camp without your volunteer service. Staff application packets are also available from the Web site listed above. Staff positions will be limited, so be sure to get your application in early!

## Camp Osage Hills

Osage Hills State Park, HC 73, Box 84, Pawhuska, Oklahoma

July 31 to Aug. 3, 2006

Age Range: 6 to 12  
Fees: Camper, \$80 (\$70 for third and fourth camper from the same family). Note: Cancellations after July 1, 2006, may be subject to a \$40 cancellation fee. Teen and adult staff fees, \$20.

## Contact Information:

Thomas Clark  
P.O. Box 12322, Wichita, KS 67277  
(316) 773-3917  
E-mail: [thomas\\_clark@ucg.org](mailto:thomas_clark@ucg.org)  
Application Deadline: June 10

**Description:** The park is located about 14 miles west of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, about an hour north of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and two hours from either Joplin, Missouri, or Wichita, Kansas. The park includes a crystal clear river flowing over the natural rock base, a man-made fishing lake, swimming pool and recreational facilities. Deer and wild turkeys are all over the park and are seen on a daily basis.

Camp Osage Hills offers a fully staffed three-day resident camp program. The campers are grouped by ages into dorms staffed with both a counselor and assistant counselor. Activities include swimming, fishing, canoeing, field games, arts and crafts and daily Christian Living classes.

We also provide one off-camp trip to Woolarock, the expansive former estate of oilman Frank Phillips. This trip includes a drive through a game preserve with both native and African game animals, a 19th-century "Mountain Man" camp staffed by men in period costumes, a petting zoo and a large museum featuring western art, artifacts and cultural history of Native Americans and Western American history.

We encourage parents and grandparents to apply to work on staff, as well as teens and young adults with a desire to serve the youth in the Church. Staff should plan to arrive on site by 2 p.m. on Sunday.

## Northwest Region Preteen Camp

Camp Davidson, 31051 SW Suttle Lake Road, Sisters, Oregon  
July 30 to Aug. 2, 2006  
Age Range: 6 to 12  
Fees: Camper, \$100; adult staff, no charge

**Contact Information:**  
John Cafourek  
720 Van Buren Dr., Salem, OR 97304  
(503) 587-7053

E-mail: [john\\_cafourek@ucg.org](mailto:john_cafourek@ucg.org)  
Application Deadline: June 15

**Description:** Davidson Preteen Camp runs simultaneously with the teen camp for the Northwest Region. Activities include Christian Living classes, archery, swimming, canoeing and paddleboats, tubing behind a ski boat, zip line challenge course, sports decathlon, music, arts and crafts, campfire and miniature golf.

Last year we had 72 campers and 35 staff. This coming year will be our fifth year to have the preteen camp. UN



# Local Church Updates

## Houston Says Farewell to the Franks

The Sabbath of Jan. 14 brought smiles and tears to the overflow crowd at the Houston, Texas, North congregation's Broze Hall. It was the last Sabbath of Jim and Sharron Franks' pastorate in the Houston area. The Franks were moving on to the home office in Cincinnati to take on the task of operation manager for Ministerial Services.

The emotional services included two pieces of special music, "Shout to the Lord," performed by the teen choir and directed by Gina Whitley, and "God Be With You 'til We Meet Again," performed by the adult choir and directed by Ivor Mitchell and accompanied by Barbara Haynes on the piano.

Mr. Franks gave the sermon titled "Farewell Addresses" and mentioned his family had received "so many blessings here in Houston." Among the statistics Mr. Franks spoke of were his giving of over 1,000 sermons, conducting about 1,000 Bible studies, performing 52 weddings, 66 funerals and logging over a million miles driving since arriving in Houston in July 1987.

The Houston North congregation has grown to over 400 people compared to 275 in 1995, Mr. Franks said. Mr. Franks spoke of the toughness in the Houston congregations during that "tumultuous" period in the Church. Some of the passages Mr. Franks read were Joshua 23:1-6, Acts 20:17-38, Ezekiel 22:30, Romans 8:22-23 and Nehemiah 13. Mr. Franks said, "There is no second-class citizen in the Church of God."

Mr. Franks also reminisced over humorous, sad and frightening moments shared in his family's tenure in Houston. Mr. Franks ended his remarks by reading from a letter by Herbert Armstrong dated Dec. 12, 1958. He encouraged the congregation to continue to stand firm on our belief in this way of life, giving our full support to the new pastor, Jim Servidio, and to keep striving for God's Kingdom.

Following the sermon Mr. Franks made it a point to say good-bye to each member of the 400-plus-member congregation. Many stayed for the Franks' "Going Away" reception later that evening. We then sent the Franks to Ohio with bellies full of good ol' Texan BBQ and with a memorable rendition of the Soggy Bottom Boys' "Man O' Sorrows" performed by Koehler Powell, Robert Zamora and James Followell Sr.

As the group expressed during the show after dinner, we hope this is not a permanent good-bye but merely a temporary relocation until they "Come Back to Texas."

*Peter M. Gabriel and Liz Ryan*

## Bay Area Auctions Cakes for Scholarships

On Jan. 21, 2006, the Oakland, San Jose and Santa Rosa, California, congregations held an Italian potluck dinner and cake auction. Cakes were baked by local brethren. The lively cake auction was organized to contribute to the LifeNets Developing Nations Scholarship Fund. This is the second year a cake auction has been conducted to raise money for a worthy cause.



Fred Crow and his daughter Tracy Ogaz lead the bidding on a cake in a benefit auction in the San Francisco Bay Area (photos by Hernan Canas)

Auctioneer and San Jose elder Fred Crow led several spirited bidding wars that helped produce a total of \$3,762. The money will be used to help young adults in the Church in Latin America and Africa attend college or university.

*Mark Roem*

## Charlotte Celebrates 10th Anniversary

On Jan. 21, 2006, brethren in Charlotte, North Carolina, celebrated the congregation's 10th anniversary. Afternoon services were followed by a potluck supper. The centerpiece of the desserts was a cake with the UCG seal.

An evening of reminiscing was led by our pastor, David Mills, who began the Charlotte congregation as an extension of the Asheboro congregation, which



Charlotte, North Carolina, congregation poses during 10th anniversary celebration (photo by Nancy Holloway)

started the previous spring. Members were invited to share their comments about the growth of the congregation. Everyone agreed that friendliness, unity and working together are strengths

developed by the Charlotte church over the past 10 years.

Accompanist Helen Meek was presented with a crystal piano-shaped music box as a token of appreciation for her service to the congregation. A slide show and picture albums were also displayed, showing events of the past 10 years. Everyone took lots of pictures to share as we look forward to our next anniversary celebration!

*Marti Springer*

## Fort Smith Celebrates 40th Anniversary

On Feb. 12, 1966, 115 from far and near gathered at the Fort Smith, Arkansas, Holiday Inn to establish our Church of God congregation. On Feb. 25, 2006, pastor Roger West conducted combined services of the Western Arkansas congregations of Fort Smith, Bentonville and Mena to celebrate the Fort Smith 40th anniversary, with 88 in attendance.

Of these, six had been present at the first service 40 years ago: Vendor Barrett, Doice Hedge, Sybil Shaw, Mary Satterfield, Marie Wann and Bob Hedge. Those present 40 years ago but unable to attend because of health or other reasons were Albert Barrett, Lizzie McClung, Leola Johnson, William and Imogene Bingham.

Previous pastors include John Elliott, Chuck Zimmerman and Ozzie Engelbart.



Original Fort Smith members: Vendor Barrett, Doice Hedge, Mary Satterfield, Sybil Shaw, Marie Wann and Bob Hedge

The speakers at the anniversary service had both been present at the first service. Vendor Barrett gave the history of the Fort Smith congregation in a sermonette titled "Why Are You Here?" Bob Hedge gave the sermon, titled "The Seven Faithful Sayings."

Services were followed by a potluck meal with a giant anniversary cake.

*Bob Hedge*

## Cincinnati East Displays Variety

Cincinnati East, Ohio, hosted its annual variety show March 18. The evening began with a wonderful potluck, including a dessert table

filled with a variety of desserts to sample.

A special activity was added this year. A teen arts and crafts exhibit gave the teens an opportunity to showcase their handiwork. There were 11 teens participating, with a total of 25 entries. After viewing the art display, it was time to sit down and get comfortable for a wonderful variety show.

Ed Smith once again emceed the evening. The show kicked off with a vocal solo done by Dave Evans, "Go There With You." Then "New Orleans Jazz" was played on the piano by Garrett Fenchel. Such skits as "The Silly



Briana and her dad, Dave Evans, sing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" (photo by Janet Treadway)

Walk," "Secret Agent Man" and "It's My Party" kept us in stitches.

There were several dance numbers, more vocals, piano solos, instrumental duets, guitar and banjo music and much more. Dave Evans and his daughter Briana performed the full version of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," which few had heard before.

When the evening was over, we had heard 26 different acts. The congregation presented Ed and Angie Smith with a bouquet of flowers for all their work in putting the show together.

*Janet Treadway*

## Minister Featured in Rotarian Magazine

Victor Kubik, pastor of the Lafayette and Terre Haute, Indiana, congregations, and a member of the Council of Elders, was featured in the April 2006 issue of *Rotarian* magazine. *Rotarian* goes to 1.3 million Rotarians in 33,000 clubs in more than 100 countries.

The article, "Champion for Chernobyl!" highlighted Mr. Kubik's work to help the children affected by the fallout from the nuclear reactor explosion 20 years ago in his native Ukraine. This work led Mr. Kubik to found the LifeNets charity a decade ago.

As the article explains, "With no marketing, Kubik and his growing group of volunteers collected, cata-

logued and shipped more than 70 tons of medical supplies and equipment worth more than \$1 million to the Ukrainian clinic [the Revival Center of Medical Social Rehabilitation of Disabled Children]."

Soon after the article came out, Rotarians began contacting Mr. Kubik. "People from all over the world are contacting me about the story about Chernobyl," he said. The article can be found on Rotary's Web page at [www.rotary.org/newsroom/features/0604\\_tr\\_chernobyl.html](http://www.rotary.org/newsroom/features/0604_tr_chernobyl.html).

## Houston Hosts Teen Show

Feb. 18 marked the third annual Teen Entertainment Night for the Houston area. This highly anticipated Sabbath included not only an evening of entertainment for the congregation, but also allowed teens to serve in the capacities of parking lot duty, door greeting, song leading, special music, ushering and refreshments throughout the day.

The evening began with a catered meal of lasagna, garlic bread, salad and homemade desserts—all of which were organized and prepared by the teens.

This year's teen show took on the theme of "50 Years of Music" to coincide with the congregation's 50th anniversary. The young people performed musical numbers, skits and dances to represent each decade, begin-



One of the 30 acts Houston teens put on (photo by Sharon VanSchuyver)

ning with the 1950s through the present. Applause and laughter filled the hall for two hours as the show included the Rat Pack, the Beatles, Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, Sonny and Cher, ZZ Top and more.

A daring dance team led off with the stroll and followed up with small segments of dances from each decade, including the hand jive, the twist, the "car wash," the hustle and the macarena. The skit team included acts from *I Love Lucy*, *The Gong Show* and a spoof of commercial favorite, "Where's the Beef?" Many audience members agreed that this was the best show ever.

It seemed to hold appeal for all audience members, young and old. Including the opening number and the finale (which included all cast members), the entire show encompassed 30 acts. Special recognition goes to Sharon VanSchuyver (coordinator) and David Buchanan.

*Sharon VanSchuyver and Peter M. Gabriel*



## Houston North Seniors Enjoy Italian Dinner

The Houston North, Texas, Silver Ambassadors had an Italian dinner on Saturday night, Feb. 25. At least 50 brethren enjoyed an evening full of food, fun and fellowship. The meal included lasagna, salad, bread sticks and an array of desserts. Fred Sodergren, Trish Marshall, Alice Jewell and Lois Peden served the group from the kitchen.

Those who stayed after the dinner enjoyed several rounds of bingo and other games. There was a lot of excitement and plenty of yelling going on. Our newest senior, pastor Jim Servidio, finally won a round before calling it a night. When all the prizes had been won and bingo ended, several more went home, leaving just two tables of game players. One table played taboo and the other played several rounds of hand and foot.

Frank Jewell was the bingo caller for the evening. Wylie and Trish Marshall organized the games and took pictures for the evening.

*Kitra Roe*

## Elders Report on Those Affected by Hurricane Katrina

Eight months after Hurricane Katrina cut its devastating path through southeastern Louisiana and southern Mississippi, United brethren are continuing efforts to rebuild and make repairs. In some areas of the Gulf South, namely certain parts of New Orleans and outlying pockets to the east, rebuilding is slow and, in many neighborhoods, seemingly nonex-



Linda Bergeron, 83, has lived in a "tent city" since Hurricane Katrina. Though she could relocate, she says she'll remain as long as her neighbors are there. She remains positive and giving

istent. In other regions, life is getting back to normal.

Vic and Beverly Kubik visited the brethren in the New Orleans, Louisiana, area Feb. 25, and saw firsthand the devastation caused by Katrina last August.

"We were moved by their positive and courageous spirit," Mr. Kubik said. "Several have had damage to homes and some still live in trailers as their homes are being repaired. Their spirit and faith is second to none. While they had gone through suffering themselves, their

focus was on others and the work of God."

After receiving generous donations from UCG members (and nonmembers), the UCG Good Works Program as well as the LifeNets charitable organization contributed large amounts of funds to assist God's people here. The amount expended thus far helping 52 brethren (approximately one third of the people in our three congregations) has totaled just over \$48,500 (\$36,250 from Good Works and \$12,250 from LifeNets).

Immediately after Katrina, funds were used to get essential supplies to members, give emergency financial aid and assist with evacuation costs. Subsequently, the money has been used for a variety of purposes, including tree removals and stump grinding; roof, flooring, drywall and structural repairs and/or replacement; appliance, furniture and clothing replacement; relocation costs; and financial assistance due to lost income.

A portion of the LifeNets aid was dedicated for the purpose of enabling our members to, in turn, directly assist others in their respective communities. Brethren used this money to house and feed displaced family members and strangers in their homes, provide bedding supplies to evacuees living in a makeshift tent city in Chalmette, Louisiana, and purchase household items for several families who lost everything when their homes were flooded to the rooftops.

The brethren faced some incredible circumstances. There are too many stories to tell, but here are a few of the highlights.

Chris Rogillio and her 86-year-old father, John Baggett, of the Covington, Louisiana, congregation, along with Chris' two daughters and their children, spent over a day trapped in the attic of

their home in Slidell waiting for the floodwaters to recede.

Dorothy Lewis, a member in the New Orleans congregation, was evacuated from New Orleans

by helicopter after being stranded on a rooftop for several hours.

Donna Jones returned to her home in Holly Beach, western Louisiana, to find only her lawn mower and bathtub. Everything else, including her house, had been swept out to sea. With FEMA and Good Works funds, she was able to purchase and furnish a small, modest home farther inland.

A fourth lady, Linda Bergeron (age 83), had her home flooded in Chalmette. Even though she had been provided with a FEMA trailer at her home, she insisted on continuing to reside in a tent city so she could assist people in need.

Many brethren "rode it out" in their homes, because they were far enough inland to be unaffected by floodwaters. They watched and prayed while trees crashed on and through their homes. Nathan and Violet Sanders lost 40 trees in their one-acre yard, pulling several off their roof.

Tom and Sandy Letellier watched as 170-mile-an-hour winds drove horizontal rain through the walls of their log cabin home.

Thankfully, as has been stated in previous updates, all of the brethren survived. It has been inspiring to witness God's people as they keep the perspective of the bigger picture through this ongoing hardship. They realize that tougher times are ahead for mankind prior to Jesus Christ's return, but regardless of their physical circumstances, God will see them through.

The financial needs of several of the brethren in the area are ongoing as they rebuild. Ten members' homes experienced flood damage—five of them are still living in FEMA trailers or other temporary housing until either their homes are repaired or until they purchase/rent other housing.

However, as a result of the abundant outpouring of financial support from God's people around the world, the needs of God's people here continue to be met. I am reminded of Paul's praise for the churches in Macedonia for a similar deed (2 Corinthians 8:1-7). The Gulf South congregations thank you.

*Andy Burnett, pastor of the Covington and New Orleans, Louisiana, and Laurel, Mississippi, congregations*

## UCG Member's Proposal Passes State Legislation

Charles Johnson, a UCG member in the Kansas City, Kansas, congregation, learned recently that the development plan he and his committee proposed to the Kansas legislature passed both houses with only one dissenting vote. Mr. Johnson, a member of the Miami County Economic Development Board in Osawatimie, Kansas, brainstormed and spearheaded the project.

The *Osawatimie Graphic* newspaper reported that the work on the proposal began in earnest a year ago. A task force worked with engineers to come up with a comprehensive proposal outlining how the community could develop businesses and housing in the area, which includes 4,500 acres.

The proposal is based on developing "mini-enterprise zones," which the plan says would include "anywhere from several hundred to several thousand acres" established by "clusters of economically progressive communities." The zones would be close to other enterprise areas and could be served by a community's infrastructure. A percentage of 386 acres surplus land within the city limits would be reserved to develop industry, ranging from bio-science research to public-service facilities.

Mr. Johnson, Osawatimie Economic Development Committee member Lois Young and Miami County Economic Development Director Sandy Allison make up the Eastern Kansas Economic Initiative committee, which developed the proposal.

Charles Johnson has been a member of God's Church for over 30 years,

working for the Church in the 1960s and later developing businesses in Phoenix, Arizona. He moved to the Kansas City area eight years ago. Along with his work with his local community, he states he is a "stay-at-home mom" taking care of his daughter, Charles, along with his son, Ryan, and daughter, Kelsey, attend in Kansas City. Church members were surprised to hear about his project, as he never boasts about his successes.

*Gregory Sargent*

## 80-Year-Old Helps Save Lives, Then Leads Songs

Jan. 21 was a most unusual Sabbath for elder Joseph Moulton of Ottawa, Ontario. The morning started with a sudden snowstorm (not so unusual) but as he and his wife, Mary, traveled on the freeway, they came upon a stopped car and people flagging them to stop. Off the road, almost out of view, was a vehicle upside down in the Nation River.

Two people were inside the car, windows down, the front doors jammed from the crushed roof. The two inside were just keeping their heads above the freezing water. One rescuer was in water to his waist while Mr. Moulton assisted in water to his knees.

They pulled the 60-year-old man out through the back door. However, the lady driver was in a more difficult position. They had to ask her to take a deep breath and go under the water in order to be pulled out.

Both escaped safely. Mr. and Mrs. Moulton then continued on to church where he was to lead songs that Sabbath. So an 80-year-old helped rescue two "young" 60-year-olds and then led hymns in trousers wet to his knees!

*From United News Canada*

## South Florida Young Adults Raise \$2,700 for Malawi

On the evening of March 25, the young adults' club of the West Palm Beach and Miami, Florida, congregations conducted an auction to raise funds for the LifeNets Malawi Chizeni Clinic.

Members from West Palm Beach and Miami donated items to be sold in the auction. Many of the items were made by the members and illustrated some of their unique talents. Baby quilts, wine and cheese baskets, drawings and floral arrangements were just a few of the items made by the members.

Mike Moore proved to be an excellent auctioneer as he was able to sell every item that was donated. When it was all over, more than \$2,700 had been raised.

This was the first project to be sponsored by our newly formed young



The combined Miami/West Palm Beach, Florida, young adults' club adults' club, and it proved to be a great success. Special thanks go to Justin Rivers and Kim Carreiro for coordinating the event.

*Roy Demaree*

## Huntsville Says Good-Bye to the Beams

The Huntsville, Alabama, congregation said a tearful good-bye to Rick and Angela Beam on Dec. 31. Mr. Beam had pastored the Huntsville congregation since 1993, and jointly pastored Cleveland, Tennessee, and Huntsville since 1995. He also pastored the Florence, Gadsden and Birmingham, Alabama, congregations for short periods of time while also pastoring Huntsville.

The Beams' faithfulness to God and His truth was a great stabilizing factor to the congregation at a time when there was great uncertainty. Mr. Beam's wisdom combined with his shining example of humility, patience and great "people skills" were also a tremendous benefit, and these qualities were only surpassed by his complete devotion to God and God's people.

The Beams have moved on to Paducah, Kentucky, and are now serving



Rick and Angela Beam open gifts in Huntsville (photo by Rhonda Beam)

Paducah and the Poplar Bluff and Cape Girardeau, Missouri, congregations.

The Beams were presented with gifts and many personal notes of thanks. Catherine Cole organized a formal going away "tea," and Faye Boston also made a beautiful cake for the occasion.

*Nancy Morgan*

**Local Church Updates:** If your congregation's news and events are rarely covered in *United News*, why not check with your pastor and write something for him to send in? We're looking for 100- to 300-word articles and photographs with captions. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you would like photos returned. Include the author's and photographer's names and your phone number. Please double-check the spelling of names. Please e-mail (preferred) or give the material to your local pastor to forward to *United News*.

# Announcements

## Births

Jesse and Lisa (Essex) Velasquez of the Garden Grove, California, congregation are thrilled to announce the birth



Chavonne Lauren Velasquez

of their first child, daughter Chavonne Lauren. Chavonne was born on Nov. 10, 2005, in Murrieta, California, weighing 7 pounds 13 ounces and measuring 19 inches long. Proud grandparents are Alfredo and Esther Velasquez of Norwalk, California, and Larry and Gayle Essex of Percival, Iowa.

Samuel Jorgensen was born on Nov. 4, 2005, weighing 7 pounds 13 ounces and measuring 20 inches long. He is the first child of Dan Jorgensen and Nancy



Samuel Jorgensen

Binos-Jorgensen of the Boise, Idaho, congregation.

Samuel is the 10th grandchild of Robert and Susan Jorgensen of the Boise congregation and the 28th grandchild of Eduardo and Alicia Binos of the Baguio City, Philippines, congregation.

Mike, Sarah (Vreeland), Joshua and Katie Hauck of the Chicago, Illinois,



David Thomas Hauck

congregation are thrilled to announce the birth of David Thomas Hauck. David was born three weeks early on Feb. 20, 2006, weighing 6 pounds 13 ounces and was 20 inches long. Big brother and sister are a tremendous help and are loving their new brother. David is welcomed by grandparents Tom and Pam Vreeland and Bill and Helen Hauck, along with many aunts, uncles and cousins.

David and Carolina Clark of the Garden Grove, California, congregation are very happy to announce the birth of twin girls, Karen Lee and Kathleen Sophia Clark on March 1, 2006. Karen weighed 4 pounds 8 ounces and measured 17 1/4 inches and Kathleen weighed 5 pounds



Karen Lee and Kathleen Sophia Clark

3 ounces and measured 18 inches long. The twins are the first two grandchildren for Ada Velazco of Lima, Peru, and the sixth and seventh grandchildren of Roland and Dianne Clark of Valley Center, California.

John and Lisa (Browning) McKinney of the Portsmouth, Ohio, congregation are very pleased to announce the arrival of their first child, Seth Thomas. Seth was born on Feb. 10, 2006, weighing 7 pounds 13 ounces and measuring 21 1/4 inches long.

Seth was joyfully welcomed to the



Seth Thomas McKinney

family by very proud first-time grandparents Wally and Sharon Browning of Vancouver, Washington, and Wanda and Tom McKinney of Vanceburg, Kentucky. Aunts Esther and Cindy McKinney and Uncles Matt McKinney and David Browning are extremely taken with the new member of the family, who has everyone wrapped around his little finger.

## Weddings

Tim and Brenda Robinson of Salem, Oregon, and Bruce and Sandy Koester of Portland, Oregon, are

pleased to announce the joyous marriage of their children, Sabrina Faye Robinson and Carl Calvin Koester. The wedding was held on Jan. 15, 2006, at the McMinnville Grand Ballroom in McMinnville, Oregon. The sister of the bride, Jamie Robinson, was the maid of honor, and Glenn Koester, the brother of the groom, was the best man. Other attendants included Monica Morales, Debbie Werner, Jake Neiffer and Brian Wineland.



Carl and Sabrina Koester

Carl currently attends OSU as an engineering graduate student and Sabrina works as a marketing coordinator for REMAX 2000 in Corvallis, Oregon.

Roger and Grace DeVenny of Swoope, Virginia, and Daniel and Karen Lovegrove of Churchville, Virginia, would like to announce the union of their families by the marriage of Matthew Alan DeVenny to Amanda Danielle Lovegrove on July 17, 2005.

The wedding took place at sunset under a gazebo facing the mountains in the Shenandoah Valley. Mark Winner performed the ceremony at Matthew's childhood home. It started out cloudy and misted through the ceremony, and afterwards became a downpour. Then the clouds opened up, and the last rays of the setting sun gave us a rainbow.

Danielle's maid of honor was Tasha Hamer, a childhood best friend. Bethany



Danielle and Matthew DeVenny

Morris, a dear friend of the bride, and Sarah Jo DeVenny, a new sister, were bridesmaids. Matthew's best man was Chris Stewart from Michigan. Samuel Lewis Cook II, Matthew's brother, was a groomsman.

A special mention is given to Colleen Winner, Jami Cook and Elisha Kennebeck for their assistance in the preparations for the wedding.

The couple now resides in Fairfax, Virginia, and attends the Columbia, Maryland, United Church of God.

From the moment they met, it was a beautiful thing. They knew someday, they'd hear wedding bells ring! Lora Opal Wenzel and Chad Aaron Mortier are pleased to announce that they were united in marriage on Dec. 17, 2005, in

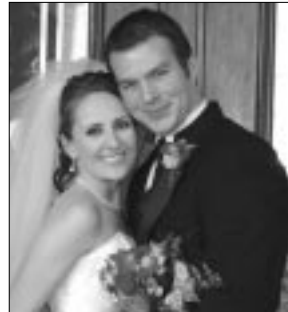


Lora and Chad Mortier

Brillion, Wisconsin. The ceremony was performed by Michael Hanisko.

Chad is the son of Donn and Alice Mortier and Lora is the daughter of Leonard and Kathryn Hatter. The couple now reside in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and attend the Oshkosh, Wisconsin, congregation.

Richard and Teeka Glasgow of Garland, Texas, and Dennis and Paula Hughes of Arp, Texas, are delighted to announce the union of their children, Chelsea Brianna Glasgow and Eric Christopher Hughes. They were wed on Dec. 18, 2005. Chelsea's bridesmaids included Kristina Joyner, Laura Richey,



Chelsea and Eric Hughes

Brandy Damour and Alissa Hughes; Eric's groomsmen included Andy and Sam Hughes, Dan Richey and Justin Glasgow. The couple have made their home in Richardson, Texas.

Dan and Barbara Anderson of Phoenix, Arizona, and Jim and Joan Tuck of Brentwood, California, would like to announce the marriage of their children, Melanie Leah Anderson and Stephen Michael Tuck.

The wedding took place on Dec. 23, 2005, under warm sunny skies in Chandler, Arizona, with nearly 200 in attendance. The groom's father, Jim Tuck, performed the ceremony.

Bridesmaids included Jodi Cox (Anderson), Paola Atallat and Meredith Black; and the groomsmen were Shaun Tuck, John Anderson and Jonathan Tuck. The couple reside in Queen Creek,



Melanie and Stephen Tuck

Arizona, and attend the Phoenix East congregation.

Jerry Wayne Wright and Frankie Lee Unzicker were married on Feb. 26, 2006. They reside in Neosho, Missouri,



Jerry and Frankie Wright

and attend the Joplin, Missouri, congregation.

## Anniversaries

The Columbia, Maryland, congregation recognized Wayne and Jean Diggins for 50 years of marriage on their wedding anniversary, Feb. 25, 2006.

Their example of commitment was cited in the sermonette delivered by one of their "godly offspring." Fourteen members of the family attended the service with Wayne and Jean, including some of their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

They have been members of the Church since 1968 and have six children, 12 grandchildren and three great-



Jean and Wayne Diggins

grandchildren. Everyone enjoyed cake and ice cream after the service.

Ron and Loretta (Haines) Woodbridge of the Wichita, Kansas, congregation, celebrated their 50th wedding

anniversary Dec. 19, 2005. Their children and grandchildren hosted a reception in their honor Dec. 18, which was attended by many of their friends and family despite very wintry weather. The Woodbridges were also honored by the congregation with flowers for their anniversary and cake and punch at the January potluck and Bible study.

Ron and Loretta were high school sweethearts and were married Dec. 19, 1955. They have six children and their spouses: Kristy and Kent Foraker, Don and Nancy Woodbridge, Kathy and Curt Schellenger, Karen and Dave Fergen,



Loretta and Ron Woodbridge

Tom and Susan Woodbridge, and Ron and David Garden. They have also been blessed to have 15 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The Woodbridges were called into God's Church in 1971 and Ron was ordained as an elder in 1993.

## Obituaries

David A. Goodrich, 73, died Feb. 24, 2006, at his home in Berwick, Maine, after a long battle with two types of lymphoma.

He was the eldest of four siblings, born July 23, 1932, to Marion M. and Wilmer W. Goodrich. His two brothers and his sister predeceased him, as did his second child, Israel.

He was baptized in 1968, a third-generation member of God's Church, as was his sister.

He lived on his farm in Berwick all of his life, mastering many skills in the Yankee tradition. He was a truck driver for some time and became a master mechanic, repairing automobiles as well as heavy equipment. He was known locally as a talented gunsmith. He was also a logger and even built his home from wood harvested from his property.

He is survived by his wife of 36 years, June Chase Goodrich; three daughters, Esther Puffer and her husband, Adam, of Berwick; Garnet Tritt and her husband, Don, of Naples, Florida; and Sunshine Goodrich of Berwick; a devoted son, Seth, also of Berwick; many nieces and nephews and cousins; and one aunt, Ethel McMullen, who is a member in the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, congregation.

David was a constant inspiration through his many years of dedicated attendance at Sabbath services and through his years of dealing with his cancer. He will be greatly missed and lovingly embraced when we see him again in that great resurrection.

Kenneth C. Herrmann died March 23, 2006, in Richardson, Texas, at the age of

82. He was one of the early students of Ambassador College in Pasadena, California. In 1953 he became a member of the faculty, becoming registrar, head of the admissions committee and a teacher of German, astronomy and geology at the Pasadena campus till 1972. Mr. Herrmann was the editor of the Ambassador College yearbook, *The Envoy*, in the early years of the college, and he also was a pioneering programmer for the early punch card addressing system used by the then Radio Church of God to send out *The Plain Truth* and other correspondence.

In 1972 Mr. Herrmann was transferred to the Big Sandy, Texas, area where he and his family have lived since that time. He contributed to various teaching needs during the summer programs in Pasadena as well as at the Big Sandy campus until the campus closed.

He was born on a dairy farm in a German-speaking community in the Colby, Wisconsin, area in 1924. His parents were children of German immigrants, and he spoke German as a child.

Mr. Herrmann first heard *The World Tomorrow* program while he was working as a farmhand in Nebraska. He drove out to Pasadena in 1948 thinking that, if Mr. Armstrong was telling the truth, "It would be worthwhile to go out and check this man out." He ended up enrolling in Ambassador as the only new student to arrive in time for the beginning of the second year of the college, until he was joined by brothers Raymond and Marion McNair. One of his earliest memories of Mr. Armstrong was being taken grocery shopping by him when he first arrived in Pasadena.

In 1952 Mr. Herrmann married an Ambassador coed who was from the



Kenneth C. Herrmann

Little Rock area of Arkansas, Elise Bernard (who died in 1997).

Mr. Herrmann wrote many articles for the early *Plain Truth* and *Good News* issues including articles about creation and God's sacred calendar. His 1967 master of arts thesis was titled "Calendar and Eclipse Interrelationships."

Kenneth Herrmann's interests, besides astronomy and geology, covered a wide field including mathematics, linguistics, ancient history and genealogy. He enjoyed camping, hiking and hard physical work—a reflection of his farm background.

He was known as an interesting conversationalist who enjoyed teasing people with ideas in order to get them to think outside the box. His employees remember him as a good boss and an easy man to work for.

He is survived by three siblings in

Wisconsin and five children, Susan and Brenda, who live in Ohio, and Karl, Peggy and Edith and their spouses who live in Texas; three grandsons, a granddaughter and a great-grandson.

Fred D. DeMaestri, 47, died Dec. 6, 2005, during a work-related incident as a truck driver. Fred was a dear friend to many in the Spokane, Washington/Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, congregation who got to know him in the short time he was with us.

Fred was born May 12, 1958, in Detroit, Michigan, to Donald and Mary Lillian (Chiochety) DeMaestri. After graduating in 1976 from Stevenson High School in Livonia, Michigan, he worked in the Lagonia area for several



Fred D. DeMaestri

years as cement finisher and truck driver. In the winter of 1982-83 Fred moved to Alaska and worked for several years as a truck driver on the North Slope before moving to Spokane in 2003 where he worked at another truck driving job until his death.

What drew Fred to the Church all started about five years ago when his mother was in a doctor's waiting room one day. There she found a *Good News* magazine. Mrs. DeMaestri liked the magazine and sent subscription cards to each of her sons and daughters. Fred was still working on the North Slope when he received his card and sent it in. After this Fred started receiving the magazine and some tapes from the Church.

Fred's friends remember when he first attended the Spokane/Coeur d'Alene services in his blue jeans about 2½ years ago. He also started listening to local sermon tapes, which he would take with him when he went back to work in Alaska. As God was drawing Fred closer and closer to the Church, he knew he would have to quit his job to keep the Sabbath. After the conclusion of his job in Alaska, Fred moved to Spokane permanently and attended services regularly. Fred was baptized in February of 2004. Fred was inquisitive about the Bible and asked many questions. He was concerned about making the right choice according to God's law.

It did not take long for Fred to befriend the entire congregation and fit right in. He was always there to help set up and take down. There was never a dull moment with Fred. He had a magnetic personality, and his enthusiasm to serve God stirred up the congregation. Fred had a tender heart and everybody loved him. He had neighbors who loved him also; even the kids called him Uncle Fred.

During the week he looked forward to the Sabbath and meeting with the

brethren. One thing that Fred longed for was a family relationship that he found in the Church. He told several of the brethren the Sabbath was definitely the high point of the week for him. We all miss him greatly and look forward to the time when we will see him again in the resurrection.

A special memorial service was held in honor of Fred on Dec. 10 by the Spokane/Coeur d'Alene congregation. Mark Mickelson conducted the memorial services and said that it was one of the hardest memorial services he has had to give. You can get the services by going to UCG-Spokane.org, click on "Sermon and Bible Study Archives," then scroll down to "Sting of Death," Dec. 10, 2005.

Survivors include his mother, Mary Lillian DeMaestri of Livonia; brothers, Darin DeMaestri of Fullerton, California, and Randy DeMaestri of Taylors, South Carolina; sisters, Donna Minor of Yorba Linda, California, and Nina Hildebrandt of Detroit. Fred's father died in 1999.

Berneice Fuller, a member of the Ocala, Florida, United congregation, died Feb. 24, 2006. She was 96.

Berneice, or Grandma Fuller as she was affectionately called, was a member of God's Church for 22 years. Eleven of those years were spent in the Tampa, Florida, congregation. She also attended in Lakeland and briefly in Ocala until ill health prevented her from attending.

She always spoke of how meaningful her first Feast was to her. Soon after attending it with her daughter and grandchildren, she was completely healed of chronic asthma.

She is survived by a daughter, Dolores, and four grandchildren who are Church members living in Ocala. She is also survived by five other grandchildren, several great-grandchildren and



Berneice Fuller

many nephews and nieces. A memorial service was held for her on the Sabbath of March 4. Richard Thompson officiated at the service and grandson Chris Westrick gave the eulogy.

Laura Thompson, 81, died March 3, 2006, in Brookings, South Dakota, after an extended battle with congestive heart failure. Mrs. Thompson was baptized in 1973, and was a member of the UCG-Watertown, South Dakota, congregation.

Mrs. Thompson was preceded in

## Tribute: Irene Schnippert

Irene Schnippert, wife of deceased elder Bernard W. Schnippert, died peacefully on May 22, 2005. She was born on Aug. 15, 1921, the third child of Amelia and William Welch. She grew up in several towns in a small perimeter in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, area, including Mt. Lebanon, where she later raised her family.

In addition to her studies at Mt. Lebanon High, she completed a certificate in cosmetology and received a beautician's license. Her brother Dave remembers that growing up she was "awfully pretty." In addition to playing the piano, she enjoyed roller-skating and riding motorcycles!

She continued this adventurous life when she met Bernard Francis Schnippert at the airport, where he took her for a ride in his Piper Cub, a small, single-engine airplane popular at the time. She married her soldier sweetheart on March 22, 1943, in a simple planned elopement.

She spent nine difficult months thinking herself a widow when Bernard was a prisoner of war in Europe. After his release, they built a home in Mt. Lebanon and had two children, Karen Irene and Bernard William. Later on, she and her husband were baptized into the Church of God.

For years Irene assisted with food preparation and service for Spokesman's Clubs and potlucks. She later helped her husband perfect his sermons by listening and giving constructive criticism. In 1993 she and



Irene Schnippert

Bernie celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Most of all she is remembered as a homemaker and family person. Irene was never employed after marriage, but for many years she gave permanents to relatives and Church friends. She enjoyed baking more than cooking, making delicious pies of every variety and the most mouth-watering cream puffs. After the children left home, Irene learned to sew, making nearly all of her clothes. She always thoroughly enjoyed cleaning and kept the home to a standard of perfection. Her role of helpmeet to her husband was a pleasure for her.

At his death in October 1998, some of the light seemed to go out of her life, and her health declined. She is survived by her daughter, Karen, of Glendora, California; son, Bernard, of Bend, Oregon; brother, Dave; six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Karen I. Lavaty and Bernard W. Schnippert

death by her parents, her beloved husband Glen, seven brothers and sisters and one grandchild. She is survived by six children, 11 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

She was born Dec. 16, 1924, in Chicago, Illinois, to Antonio and Vincenza Di Domenico. She was married and had four children in Chicago. In 1965 Laura married Glen and moved to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, with her four children. There they were blessed with two more children.

Laura and Glen were active in the Church and community. They enjoyed entertaining the brethren and provided thousands of meals for friends and relatives over the years. Always proud of her Italian heritage, Laura enjoyed sharing Italian foods and music and stories of her family.

She gave clothing, meals, money and her love to those who had less. She served on a literacy council and, as a mentor at the local grade school, taught reading skills to many students, in addition to visiting prisoners. She took in children, fed and clothed them and taught them a better way of life. Later in life, some of these children returned to thank her. Laura Thompson served and sacrificed for many people during her life, and she will be dearly missed.

She was a faithful and loyal member,



Laura Thompson

with an unwavering conviction. Her large family and many friends gathered to pay their respects at her funeral on March 7 in Sinai, South Dakota. Her pastor, Mitchell Knapp, officiated.

Eddie W. Jackson, 78, passed away March 11, 2006, at his home in Post Falls, Idaho. Eddie was born April 21, 1927, in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Eddie served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He worked in construction, was a long-haul truck driver, and retired from the State of Idaho.

Eddie had a great sense of humor. He had a special love for children and young people. His hobbies included hunting, camping, fishing, traveling and spending time with family and friends. He

belonged to the United Church of God and was baptized in 1988. He worked with the Youth Opportunities United group years ago, and twice a year the Y.O.U. cleaned up along the highway. On those times Eddie and his wife, Tiny, took their motor home and cooked breakfast for the group. Eddie remembered those as special times.

Eddie was preceded in death by his parents and brothers John and Carl. Survivors include his wife, Tiny, at home in Post Falls; sons Ron, Mark, Stacy and



Eddie W. Jackson

Randy; daughters Karen, Evelyn, Sally, Toni and Julie; 12 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Memorial services were held March 15 at the Yates Funeral Chapel at Hay-

den Lake, Idaho, with pastor Mark Mickelson officiating.

Bion Munson Baker passed away at home Feb. 4, 2006, at the age of 83. He was born in Saginaw, Michigan. He was the eldest son of Asa and Lela Baker. He served his country during World War II as an airplane mechanic and later became a salesman. He was baptized in 1955 and attended Church of God congregations in Grand Rapids, Flint and Lansing, Michigan.

Surviving are his wife of 40 years, Alvera Louise (Walker) Baker; son Aaron (and Lori Carignan) Baker of DeWitt, Michigan; and daughter Sharon (and David) Fitch of Lansing; and his seven grandchildren: Sebastian, Clay and Forrest Baker; and Andrew, Mariah, Caleb and Katerina Fitch. His sister, Ilene, and brother, Gale, preceded him in death.

A memorial was held Feb. 25 hosted by the local Lansing congregations of the United Church of God, Living Church of God and Church of God Fellowship with over 200 in attendance. During the service, family and friends shared memories of his love of family, God's Word, laughter, music and travel.

In his 50 years in God's Church, he served God's people in many ways, including chauffeuring more than 27



Bion Munson Baker

people (some for years) to and from church services, as well as being an enthusiastic song leader, giving sermons, being a member of choirs and various singing groups and playing his baritone in church bands. He was an avid reader of the Bible.

**Announcements:** Members are welcome to submit announcements of the births, engagements, weddings, significant anniversaries (25, 40, 50, 60, etc.) and obituaries in their families. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you would like photos returned. Most items are 50 to 100 words and should not exceed 250 words. Please e-mail (preferred) or give them to your local pastor to forward to *United News*.

## Letters

### How Many Festivals?

In Kevin Epps' article, "Holy Day Offerings and Deuteronomy 16:16" [March/April 2006, page 17], he writes that, "Leviticus 23 clearly states that there are seven festivals that are holy convocations, to be proclaimed in their seasons (Leviticus 23:4)." No, it doesn't.

There are three annual festivals, as listed in Deuteronomy 16:16. The Hebrew word for "feast" in this verse is *chag*—which is also found in Leviticus 23:6, 34, 39 and 41, referring to the Festivals of Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles.

In Leviticus 23:4 the Hebrew word translated "feasts" and "seasons" in the KJV is *mo'ed*, which means "appointment" or "appointed time"—as in Genesis 18:14.

The Day of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Last Great Day are annual Holy Days, but none of them fall within the three festival periods. Referring to the "Feast of Atonement" is an oxymoron.

Internet

You raise an interesting point regarding the Hebrew words for "feast." Your premise, as I understand it, is that there are only three annual "festivals" (*chag*, e.g., *Feasts of Unleavened Bread, Weeks and Tabernacles*) and that the other Hebrew word, *mowed*, indicates "appointed times." Therefore, you conclude that the United News article is wrong in saying, "Leviticus 23 clearly states that there are seven festivals that are holy convocations."

Leviticus 23:4 says, "These are the

*feasts [mowed] of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times [mowed]."* Though *chag* is the common Hebrew word for "feast," one of the definitions of *mowed* is "set feast" (Brown, Driver and Briggs' Lexicon). Here *mowed* is associated with the seven "holy convocations," which include *Trumpets, Atonement and the Last Great Day* (see *Leviticus 23:24, 27, 36*).

However, if *chag* is the determining factor for defining a "festival," exclusively, then consider *Exodus 34:25*: "nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast [*chag*] of the Passover be left until morning." This annual *chag* is not listed in *Deuteronomy 16:16*. Yet it's still a "feast." The Hebrew *chag* means "feast" or "festival sacrifice" (Brown, Driver and Briggs' Lexicon). It's true that "feast" is not explicitly included in the names for *Trumpets, Atonement and the Last Great Day*. Yet cannot *chag*, in principle, include the sacrifices on all of the festivals and Holy Days, including *Atonement*?

In summary, perhaps there's a clearer wording for the statement in the article. But the context in *Leviticus 23* is inclusive and *mowed* can refer to "set feasts." Therefore the overall outcome is the same, i.e., "festivals" are not restricted to those cited in *Deuteronomy 16:16*.

Kevin Epps

Mr. Armstrong

Thanks to those who wrote the articles in the January issue of *United News* on Mr. Armstrong. It was wonderful to read positive comments on him.

Michigan

### Learning About Passover

I would like to use your booklet, *God's Holy Day Plan*, in our home Passover observance this Nissan 14. To do so, I need to make 12 copies of your Web page booklet to be used only to instruct those at the Passover supper, and for no other reason. Would this be OK with you? If not, I will try and make up another lesson for them, but I would really love to use your booklet as I feel it is inspired and wonderfully written.

Wisconsin

### Don't Want to Miss Out

I want to thank you for sending me the publication *World News and Prophecy*. This little magazine is just full of up-to-date information about world events and how it relates to end-time prophecy from the Bible. Especially chilling is what is going on in Iran today and their work on nuclear bombs.

Please keep each issue coming. I don't want to miss out on anything concerning the Middle East.

Oklahoma

### Israeli Requests Multiple Copies of Middle East Booklet

Would you kindly inform me as to how I may obtain a bulk mailing (12 copies) of *The Middle East in Bible Prophecy* to mail to friends in the United States?

Israel

### Support From India

I appreciate the good work you are doing. After Mr. Armstrong, things were not going in the right direction. We had

no idea about anything happening in the U.S.A. But through the Internet I came to know about UCG. I would like to support the ministry. Please let me know how I can send you tithes and donations in rupee. Please let me know if we can contact someone in India representing the Church. We would also like to know about the Festival programs. It would be a great pleasure for us if we can help the Church in any way in India.

India

### Found on a Public Bench

I read your publications and find them most rewarding to my spiritual life. I was first introduced to your church when I picked up your publication from a public bench. I would like an opportunity to support your ministry. I am enclosing a check.

I appreciate your free-will giving to the people. It is beautiful and the way it should be. There are so many ministries who are money raisers. Your organizational focus is clear to me. You guys want to get the gospel out to the world as commanded by Jesus.

California

### "You Say to Look in the Bible"

Thank you for all the publications I have received. They are very eye-popping and challenging to a lot of things I have been taught. I used to just assume everything I was being taught was true. Every time your publications say something contradictory to past beliefs, you say to look in the Bible. Other views generally ask you to make a leap to make the Scriptures conform to their view or

go to another source. Thank you for sending me to the true source, God's Word.

Nebraska

### "Could Not Put It Down"

In 2003 I picked up and read *The Good News* in a doctor's waiting room and could not put it down. I was given permission by the receptionist to take it home with me. Needless to say, I've been a subscriber since and have requested numerous other publications to provide me with needed assurance of doing what pleases God in my "walk with Jesus."

Nevada

### "What Am I to Do" About the Sabbath?

I have only recently found faith in God. I'm writing to you with the hope that you can answer my question, which others who have faith seem unable to agree on. If Saturday is the true Sabbath day, what am I to do seeing as my church refuses to recognize this and instead worships God on Sundays. Will I be judged by God for worshipping Him on Sundays, and am I, by attending church on Sunday, breaking the commandment of keeping the Sabbath day holy?

Internet

Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Comments and suggestions to improve *United News* are welcome. Please let us know if you would like your name printed. Mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 or e-mail mike\_bennett@ucg.org.

## News At a Glance

Continued from page 4

The Feast will return to Hawaii in 2008.  
*Charles Melear*

### Denver Plans 50th Anniversary

The Denver, Colorado, congregation will be commemorating its 50th anniversary on Aug. 5 and 6. The actual beginning was in nearby Lyons in April 1956.

We invite anyone who has information about the history of the Denver congregation, or about the Pueblo and Fort Collins/Loveland, Colorado, and Garden City, Kansas, congregations, to contact us. We are especially interested in locating any charter members, as to date we have located only one, a member currently living in Dallas.

We will provide further information and a sign-up form on request. Contact Larry Neff at [larry\\_neff@ucg.org](mailto:larry_neff@ucg.org) (the preferred method) or by phone at (303) 470-3112 or by mail at 10267 Spotted Owl Ave., Highlands Ranch, CO 80129.

*Larry Neff*

### Costa Rica Feast Site Announced

Services and activities will be held at the Fiesta Resort ([www.fiestaresort.com](http://www.fiestaresort.com)) in beautiful Puntarenas on the Pacific coast, 90 minutes from San José, Costa Rica. The rates are:

- \$100 per night per adult.
- \$50 per night per child age 4 to 12.
- Price includes all meals, drinks, snacks and coffee break after all services.
- No off-site reservations can be made.

A variety of activities is planned during the Feast, and time will be available for day trips to visit God's marvelous creation. Services will be held in Spanish and English, with simultaneous translation.

Registration is first-come, first-served:

- Only 200 international transfers will be accepted.
- Reservations must be confirmed with a nonrefundable hotel deposit of \$200 due June 5, 2006.

• Register on-line at [www.unidaelsalvador.org/feast](http://www.unidaelsalvador.org/feast), or call Barbara Parada at (713) 914-0766 if you do not have Internet access.

• For more information, visit [www.unidaelsalvador.org/feast](http://www.unidaelsalvador.org/feast) or e-mail [unidaelsalvador@yahoo.com](mailto:unidaelsalvador@yahoo.com).

**Location of Services:** Salón El Roble, Fiesta Resort, Puntarenas, Costa Rica.

**First Service:** Friday, Oct. 6, at 7 p.m. (social to follow services).

**Tax:** Approximately \$30 per person airport departure fee.

*Herbert Cisneros*

### Public Bible Studies Held in Bend

Larry Walker, pastor of the Bend, Medford and Roseburg, Oregon, congregations, began a five-part Bible study series March 27.

He had recently taken a class titled "The Jewish Roots of Christianity" at a local Bible college, and he prepared this Bible study series as a follow-up. He gave flyers to the other 14 class members, mentioned the series in an article and the "Religion Briefs" column in the Bend newspaper and sent flyers to nearby *GN* subscribers. Two class members also sent flyers to others they know who are interested in the subject, including eight pastors of other churches.

Mr. Walker reported: "We had six new people in attendance at the first session, including two members of the class that I had been taking, the wife of one of the two and another couple that I met a few years back and recently had a three-plus hour visit with and dinner. The other new person was a man whom I have never seen before.

"Despite the few attendees, the session went very well. I felt excellent rapport with everyone and had very positive feedback from them during and after the session. All but the one man stayed long after visiting and enjoying refreshments.

"Another class member e-mailed me to let me know that he couldn't make it because of leaving for Hawaii for a long



## What's New on the Web?

[www.thisistheway.org](http://www.thisistheway.org)

This Is the Way Web site has a new design and features

new messages with comments from Clyde and Dee Kilough.

On [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org)

■ **Parenting Resources at UCG Youth**

Access articles and videos that provide helpful information for parents, youth workers,

instructors and anyone interested in the development of young people. Easy access at [www.ucgyouth.org](http://www.ucgyouth.org), click on Parenting Resources.

■ **Need help finding something** within the [ucg.org](http://ucg.org) Web site? Visit the Web site map at [www.ucg.org/help/sitemap.htm](http://www.ucg.org/help/sitemap.htm) to get an overview of all the contents in [ucg.org](http://ucg.org). Or use the search tool.

■ **UCG Commentary**  
"Biblical Holy Days Offer a Treasure of Long-lost Knowledge"

"World Troubles and Tensions"  
"Christians Who Doubt the Bible"  
"Dialog of the Deaf Separates Islam and West"

[www.ucg.org/commentary/](http://www.ucg.org/commentary/)

Featured Links

■ **Good News Web site.**

[www.gnmagazine.org](http://www.gnmagazine.org)

■ **Beyond Today**

[www.beyondtoday.tv](http://www.beyondtoday.tv)

If you have questions or comments, please contact: [webmaster@ucg.org](mailto:webmaster@ucg.org)

vacation. But he wants to get tapes of the sessions. Yet another class member who signed up to attend did not come."

### Family Weekend in Florida Set for June

The fifth annual Family Weekend in the St. Petersburg/Tampa, Florida, area will be June 10 and 11.

The weekend will begin with Sabbath services at 2:30 p.m. in Largo, Florida. David Myers, pastor of Akron and Youngstown, Ohio, will be the guest speaker. A potluck meal, a Bible study and a Western-themed family dance will follow the service.

Sun, surf and sugar-white sand will be the backdrop for Sunday's traditional beach party, which will include a barbecue lunch, games, prizes and fellowship. Activities will be at Fort DeSoto Park, named number one beach in America in 2005 by the renowned *Dr. Beach*.

Further information, including housing, maps, event schedules and costs, can be found at <http://ucg-tampabay.org/>.

### ABC Seminars Set

The education area of Ministerial Services announced the following ABC

Continuing Education Seminars:

Aug. 21-25	Cincinnati, Ohio
Sept. 9-10	Denver, Colorado
Oct. 28-29	Atlanta, Georgia
Nov. 4-5	Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas
Nov. 11-12	Calgary, Alberta
Nov. 18-19	Morton, Illinois (dates still tentative)

### Bluegrass Family Fun Weekend Set

The Wheeling, West Virginia, congregation invites musicians and brethren who enjoy music to a Bluegrass Family Fun Weekend July 20 to 23 at Sally Buffalo Park near Cadiz, Ohio.

Jam sessions, parking lot pickin' and entertainment programs will highlight activities on Thursday night, Friday and Sunday. Saturday night will feature an extended jam-session and great food. A Bible study is scheduled for Friday night. On the Sabbath there will be a Sabbath service, a potluck-style lunch and Bible studies for adults, teens and children.

Registration forms are available at [www.ucgnet.org/wheeling/bluegrass](http://www.ucgnet.org/wheeling/bluegrass). You can also request a registration form and get further information by calling Jesse Earles at (276) 650-2224 or Bob Miller at (740) 968-3106.

### Calendar of Events

May 7-8: General Conference of Elders.

May 9-11: Council meetings.

May 19-21: Ladies' Retreat on Deer Lake (north of Spokane, Washington). Theme: Pearl of Great Price; guests: Victor and Beverly Kubik; for more information, call (509) 466-4899 or e-mail [mmickelson@msn.com](mailto:mmickelson@msn.com).

May 20: Creation, Early Man and Noah's Ark seminars, Charlotte, North Carolina; guest speaker, Arnold Mendez Sr. Hosted by the South Carolina and North Carolina congregations. For more information, contact Dave Mills at [dave\\_mills@ucg.org](mailto:dave_mills@ucg.org) or phone (336) 873-8988.

May 26-29: Memorial Day Weekend, Kansas City, Missouri ([www.kc2006.com](http://www.kc2006.com)).

June 10-11: Fifth annual Family Weekend, St. Petersburg/Tampa, Florida (<http://ucg-tampabay.org/>).

July 2-4: Melody of Music, Lafayette, Indiana ([www.mom07.com](http://www.mom07.com)).

July 13-16: Teen/Young Adult Weekend in Garden Grove, California ([Luky2binhb@yahoo.com](mailto:Luky2binhb@yahoo.com)).

Aug. 5-6: Denver, Colorado, 50th Anniversary ([larry\\_neff@ucg.org](mailto:larry_neff@ucg.org)).

Sept. 3: Second Annual UCG Houston Music Festival.

### Attention Graduating Seniors and Parents!

Congratulations! We would like to feature the 2006 high school graduates in a special section of the July *United News*. Please take a few minutes to answer these questions and send a photograph by June 12, 2006.

1. Graduate's Name
2. Parents' Names
3. Congregation and Pastor's Name
4. High School Accomplishments
5. Church Activities/Hobbies/Interests (tell a little bit about yourself)
6. Plans After Graduation
7. Additional Comments (favorite quote, favorite scripture, motto, advice, etc. Please identify which it is, so we don't think your advice is your motto, etc.)

Phone number or e-mail address to confirm spellings, etc. (*Will Not Be Printed*)

Please send with a recent photo (conforming with biblical standards of dress and hair length) of the graduate by June 12.

By e-mail to: [Mike\\_Bennett@ucg.org](mailto:Mike_Bennett@ucg.org)

By mail to: *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

We reserve the right to edit for clarity and length; 250-word maximum length. Thanks!



Periodicals Postage Paid  
at Milford, Ohio, and at  
additional mailing offices